

Interview with Tony Chapman, CEO, Capital C



Tony Chapman is the Founder and CEO of Capital C, a creative communications powerhouse servicing a blue chip client base in United States and Canada. They were the first non-mass agency to receive Marketing Magazine's coveted Agency of the Year. In the past three years, Capital C has been recognized with over 50 Best of Show or Gold Awards in international and national competitions. Tony has just received the honor of being inducted into the Marketing Hall of Legends.

Tony Chapman has facilitated Big Idea brainstorming sessions with clients in Europe, United States and Canada. He has authored articles in the mainstream press as well as having made numerous appearances on national television and radio. His content and presentation delivery makes him a sought after motivational speaker and workshop leader. Tony Chapman serves on both public and not for profit boards and he is a long-standing member of the Young President's Organization. Tony can be reached at tchapman@capitalc.ca

Interview conducted by Doug Berger, INNOVATE LLC. doug@innovate1st.com

Doug: Let's start with your historical perspective on the forces that are shaping the world of advertising and marketing.

Tony: There has always been one constant: *attention is the oxygen of brand building*. You need the attention of the customer to have any chance of persuading them to buy your product. In the area of mass marketing, getting the consumer's attention came down to five words - "He-who-shouts-loudest-wins." This simple strategy enabled brands to dominate a handful of television stations and magazines with creativity that overwhelmed an unsophisticated consumer. Sugar coated cereal became premium priced - 'Tony the tiger tastes great.' Brands had all the power - with the media, the trade and the consumer.

This strategy was so simple, and so profitable, that capitalism ran rampant, creating fragmentation beyond anyone's imagination. In 1984, there were 15 television stations, today there are 500. There are now 3.3 million consumer brands with 28,000 being launched this year. Add to those a billion web sites and 30,000 new blogs a day.

Brands went from this position of power to finding themselves in the perfect storm. The trade is demanding an increasing tariff for access to their store shelves, and they view private label versus national brands as their point of differentiation. The consumer is migrating from mass media to their own media, and they are choosing what content they want to pull in. We have inflation in the cost side of the business due to increased commodities and labor, and deflation on the price side as organizations try to push their product through a choked marketplace.

Doug: Let's focus on some of the 21st century concepts. How are companies taking advantage of these new dynamics?

Tony: The companies that succeed in the future will focus on economies of speed not of scale. This is a massive step change in their thinking and execution, translating into fewer bigger and better bets – both in the brands that they invest in, as well as those ideas that they support.

The starting point is insight into the consumer. I am not talking about trends or studies, but 'head, heart and hands' - how the consumer thinks, feels and behaves today and into the future.

I'll give you an example that I think led to the greatest insight of the past. Years ago, the SC Johnson company tried to figure out how to position Raid™ bug spray. They spent some time looking at the consumer and realized that the people who have most of the problems with bugs in the house are women. When a woman sees a bug in the house, she becomes a completely different person. She kills that bug, she stomps on it, she squishes it, and she annihilates it. She treats that bug in a way that you would expect a left guard to treat his opponent on a football field. That was the insight that led to the campaign "Raid ... Kills Bugs Dead" which led to the television campaign with those great animated cartoons.

More recently, the Dove™ brand came up with the insight that only two percent of women feel beautiful. The other 98 percent were chasing false beauty stereotypes, airbrushed models from Hollywood's definition of beauty. Dove decided to zag versus zig and created the *Campaign for Real Beauty*™. Their vision was to free today and future generations of women from false beauty stereotypes. That compass gave them permission to develop products and communication and strategies with the trade that were unique because they were relevant and meaningful to the consumer.

Once you have that insight, you then need to turn it into a big idea. You saw the big idea in Raid and Dove. You need that creative platform, and from that platform, you can launch, in a most compelling fashion, an integrated and sophisticated, and sometimes dazzling array of marketing tactics. However, the tactics are always anchored to the strategy. Remember that, in the past, you needed only two tactics, "show it loud on television- show it loud in retail."

I like the analogy, television is to retail like percussion and horns are to an orchestra. They're still very important. They establish the rhythm of the brand, but sometimes it's that single flute that connects with and will change behavior forever. This whole new orchestra lies on the marketers' desks. There is mobile marketing and digital marketing and Facebook, Wal-Mart, television and marketing events. I need to bring these together with such synergy and synchronicity and in such a compelling way that when my consumer bounces like a ball in a pinball machine, from the different bumpers that I set up, whether it's digital or retail, mobile, event or advertising, they're getting that story based upon the insight.

The third thing that brand builders are realizing is that they must move their advertising from impressions to interactions. They have to go from buying impressions to having meaningful interactions with their consumer. How do I get a meaningful interaction with my consumer? I must be unique. I must find a place in the market that is still open. Where do I bring this idea to life so that it can produce the greatest results? Where can I bring this idea to life and measure those results, and learn from them?

Doug: Let's talk about this fundamental shift now, from impressions to interactions. What are specific techniques that have really worked ... innovative approaches that are soon to become best practices?

Tony: A big idea is engaging the retailer, such as Best Buy, to **let the brand come into the store and do a program that both builds their sales and builds my brand.** We did a program for Dove with Wal-Mart. Keeping in mind that only two percent of women feel beautiful, Dove wanted to come in and sponsor a self-esteem workshop at Wal-Mart stores, where mothers and daughters could come in and feel beautiful. They positioned the workshop in their George section where they sell their fashion. To get the attention of all the traffic that goes through a Wal-Mart or a Target or a Best Buy, you must go to them with a program that really makes sense to them.

Dove came out with another compelling idea - to have some of the top women's photographers shoot their version of real beauty. So, instead of being America's Top Model, these could be women from 18 to 70, and they could range from fat to fabulous. It was just real beauty as a woman, not staged. It was a wonderful program. They put on this photo tour in a couple of major cities and thousands of people had a very meaningful interaction with the brand. But, those few thousand people won't move the sales dial. So we asked, "Why can't we take that photo tour into retail? Wouldn't it be great if we had a miniature version of this in your flagship stores?" That was the first stage, and they loved it - it sold a lot of cases. It created a very positive shopping experience for the consumer in that store.

Then, the next time, we built on it and said, "Well, that was great with famous photographers, but why don't we now have a workshop where we'll get teenage girls to learn how to shoot with a digital camera? We'll give them the camera and say to them, 'Forget about famous photographers, you go shoot *your* version of real beauty.'" And they came out for this beautiful weekend. They learned about beauty and they shot this phenomenal bunch of photography. We took that photography, leveraged it with some PR and leveraged it on our websites so that people could interact with it and comment.

Then, we went back to the retailer and said, "Why don't we produce a calendar called 'Through Their Eyes' which looks through the eyes of these girls. We'll create this beautiful calendar and we'll give it to your consumers for free if they buy any two Dove products ... and by the way, for every calendar that we distribute in your stores, we'll make a donation to the Dove Self-Esteem fund." So, we created another way for the consumer to interact at retail in a very positive fashion.

You can see how the insight progresses to the big idea, which then becomes a creative platform for execution.

Doug: To summarize some of the key concepts in the Dove example ... use the insight to create:

1. A meaningful occasion for consumers at the retail store driving store traffic and immersion in the brand.
2. A visually immersive experience
3. A way to engage consumers as a community

Tony: Yes - that's a great summary. Let me give you another example from Pepsi and Frito-Lay. In Canada, hockey generates the same excitement as does the NFL or NASCAR in the U.S. Canadians live for Saturday night hockey. It's a ritual of guys coming over the TV trays with chili, chips, and, oh yeah - make sure I've got my pop. The consumer insight was this: preparing for Saturday night hockey was an important ritual. We went to the trade and said, "The insight is *preparation* - if you don't remind the Moms that there is a hockey

game coming up, they are going to order in, rather than going out to buy food.” 45% of hockey fans order in and you lose that occasion. So, we took that insight into the trade and got permission to build these phenomenal displays, because we know that if we put chili, chips and pop on display, we’re going to sell 300 percent more than if they’re bought off the shelf in the aisle. Using the web, we built this whole concept called “Bring Home the Stanley Cup” where people would tell us about their hockey shrine and game preparation. The winning entry has Mark Massey, former Stanley Cup champion, knocking on your door with the Stanley Cup, and with it, we’re going to bring a high definition TV.

So, another big idea is creating an immersive consumer experience that happens on “my time.”

Doug: Tony, let’s shift over now to the internet and the new role of digital immersion.

Tony: The interesting thing about the Internet is that great old adage about advertising - 50 percent of my advertising dollar is wasted - I just don’t know what 50 percent. With the Internet, it could be as high as 80 or 90 percent and I’ll tell you why. First, corporations spend millions of dollars building websites about which consumers do not care. I’m a consumer on the web, I care about Facebook and my community, and I care about my passions. So, whether it’s the NFL or college football or NASCAR, I can drill down as deep as I want to go in my subject matter and connect with a community of people all over the world who share my same passions. Do I really care about a corporate website? My belief is no, they don’t. They might go there for basic information ... to check out a product, to find out health information about transfat. However, immersion and returns to a website are based on an insight that is meaningful. For Dove, I’m not returning to your site because I want to find out about Dove. I’m returning to find about your self-esteem programs. Most people spend their time on the web shopping, researching or communicating. Therefore, most of the corporate stuff in the digital world does not have its intended impact.

Every once in awhile you do get “Wowed.” For example, I just got the attention of the consumer for an awfully long time, and I did it for almost nothing. Last year, we spent \$3,000 and created a viral video called “Bride Has a Massive Wig Out.” ‘Wig Out’ was an insight that, for women in general, having a bad hair day has a natural emotional reaction. They wig out. It was put into a television campaign - nobody paid attention. We produced a \$3,000 film showing a bride right before she gets married, coming back from the hair salon and hating her hair to the point where she starts cutting it all off - it was one take, a \$3,000 film. Within days, it was one of the top ten YouTube videos. It had gone around the world. Jay Leno did a spoof on it. Good Morning America and Entertainment Tonight did spots on it. It made the front page of the Israeli Times and the BBC did a documentary on it. It went around the world because the insight was so powerful and people wanted to see this trainwreck of a bride having a massive wig out. (This video contains explicit language.) [Click to see video](#)

With the Internet, you can take and pull in the content that you want. People dictate what they want to pull and when.

Doug: What are some of the new concepts for enhancing the consumer experience while doing product research?

Tony: The sooner that you can move a person from a mass to a customized experience, the better. You make sure that when they come in looking for a truck, they can customize it on your website. The second that they click on trucks, the website transforms into a truck site. They are suddenly spending a lot of time looking at performance, engine attributes,

the cab, and your website is dialing out those features. The next time they come back, they see that truck front and center, customized with both their wheels and color. If they're researching safety, make sure that you're dialing out the J.D. Powers survey on safety. You're personalizing the experience. **You're going from a mass world to my world.** The faster that I can get you from mass to my, the better becomes my opportunity to be very relevant to you. That's the world that digital can make.

Doug: We've looked at how you engage the consumer at retail. We've been talking about customizing and engaging the consumer on the web. Where else should we look?

Tony: Still, one of the most important channels for you is the mass world, because it is giving you the horns and drums to set the rhythm of your brand. You definitely need to start thinking of the role of television. It's no longer a savior. **TV and print are becoming the shepherds and their role is to shepherd the consumer into immersive experiences.** There is a great TV spot for a beer company – it ends with, "Too hot for TV. To see the ending, go to the website." I expect to see more of that kind of thing in television.

The Tundra truck from Toyota is a great example. In England, the Tundra campaign had all of these wonderful 'You can't kill a Tundra' television commercials. The most recent one shows the Tundra sitting on top of a building. Then they collapse the building - demolish it - and the person drives the tundra out from under the building. That gets across the strength and durability of the Tundra. If I were doing the web on that, the commercial would end with "Come to Tundra.uk." You would get people to write in about how they would kill a Tundra. It makes them think about the brand, and think about where they could destruct it. Then people vote on the best idea, and we do it in a television commercial. If they kill it, they win it. You've got the loop connected. Then, when I go into a Toyota store, I would want to see the Tundra hanging up on a huge crane, ready to drop down on blocks of cement. So everything is connected in an ecosystem.

Doug: I want to circle the wagon back to this original point on the critical importance of insight, and then building a total surround around the insight. What are you finding to be the most valuable tools in constructing these kinds of insights?

Tony: I find that when most people are talking about insights, what they are really talking about is behavior and the trends that they've discovered. They've gone through a discovery phase, done great research on the consumer, and have used it in attitude studies. You should be best in class at discovery if you want a competitive advantage. The insight, which comes from that discovery is, "Where is the white space?" We discovered that women are now washing their hair four times a week, but the insight was, "Wow, that woman is off balance. She's got bad hair." And boy, does she ever know it when she runs into an old boyfriend, or girlfriends, or goes on a job interview. She's almost panicking. That's a powerful insight. So, you've got to combine the left brain researcher, the dig for the analytics of the business, with some extraordinary right brained people. And they've got to work back and forth, and that's the hardest thing in the world to do.

Doug: Are there any other key points that you would like to make?

Tony: Let me go back to where we began - that the end game is the same, which is attention. It is the oxygen of brand building. That it is getting increasingly difficult to get the consumer and the trade's attention. That a marketer already faces the perfect storm of consumers fleeing from mass media and demanding more for less, as well as the trade's insatiable appetite for the brand's profits. We can no longer shout our way. Brands have lost their

power base. The only way they are going to regain that power base is through powerful consumer insight, which they bring to life with an extraordinary idea that connects with their consumers' heads, hearts and hands. I get it, I feel it, I want it.