

Footprints of Innovation

Reza Movarrei
Instructor, Project Management R&D Centre (PMIR), PIDMCo.
movarrei@pmir.com

Sara R. Vessal
Executive, Safety Committee, Iran Ministry of Roads and Transportation
Vessal@gawab.com

Abstract

Inventive principles which have been established for solving technical problems have been customized recently for other usages. This paper studies applicability of these principles in the non technical environment of marketing and advertisement. In brief, in our initial study, it seems that a footprint of inventive principles can be traced in approximately 70% of successful advertisements in Iran.

Key words: Marketing, Advertisement, TRIZ, Inventive principles.

Introduction

Advertisements are usually boring and bothersome for customers of magazines, TV programs, newspapers and websites. But there are a few exceptions which are so interesting, that remain in audience's memories for long. It was very interesting and amazing for us that in a country like Iran where TV advertisement has a history of not more than 2 decades; inventiveness is playing such a big role. For more careful study and in search of inventive patterns among them first with a limited poll more popular advertisements were identified. Totally, in more than 330 samples, only 22 were mentioned as nice, amazing, and interesting and, as a result, successful.

As a short description, the inventive principles are a part of one of TRIZ tools which is called "Contradiction Matrix". These principles are concluded after a study on a large number of selected inventive patents (40000 innovations) and summarization and categorization of their main ideas. These principles are general enough to be able to be used in various areas of business. More information about these principles can be found in any classical TRIZ book and also in the references of this paper.

Selected Advertisements

The relationship and compatibility of the following advertisements which have been selected in the poll has been studied with respect to 40 principles and the relevant principle has been mentioned with each example. In last five cases, the principle is not mentioned directly making it a puzzle for TRIZ journal readers to test their competency in usage of this TRIZ tool. To make it a little more interesting, in some examples a reverse trend has been followed, i.e. first the principle is described and then related advertisement is studied.

- Instead of a long advertisement introducing several products of a company, a set of serial advertisements are designed, enables us to create specific and customized advertisements, as an example for products which are suitable for older customers a calmer and a classic music and background can be used. A bonus of this approach is that advertisements can be scheduled to gain maximum effect, before kid's program, advertisements of toys; chocolates, etc. can be broadcasted. The famous serial advertisement of a company's dairy products is a good example of this case. In each

advertisement one of dairy products can be introduced. Then repeated patterns, background and music can be used to emphasize the unity between them. The first TRIZ inventive principle presents this idea.



Figure 1: Advertisements of flavored milk products, on billboards and TV, flavor of chocolate (above) and flavor of honey.

- All information about a product/service do not have the same importance and impression on the customer also they do not have the same requirements (such as duration) to be presented. We can highlight only the information which is essential to attract customer, making him/her sure that he/she will follow them later in the dealers. For example car manufacturers in Iran often introduce new models in TV very briefly asking customer to refer to the nearest dealer. The second TRIZ inventive principle *extraction* introduces idea of extracting and showing only necessary parts, getting rid of complexity caused by all that mass of data.

- Now we come across the third principle, local *quality*. If we assume the whole facilities of a media such as TV as the environment, it means we can use special frames in different areas of the screen with local qualities also we can utilize design of each part. For example the screen can be divided into three horizontal frames. The price of product will be shown at the top frame, the product's characteristics at the bottom frame and the picture of the feature being introduced in each time at the middle frame. Advertisements of new automobile models in Iran are arranged in such manner.
- *Asymmetry*, principle 4, can be interpreted as using elements and features asymmetrical and not in homogeneity with the norms accepted rules in the advertisement. For instance when it is common to use adults and teenagers to perform advertisements, we can increase the attractiveness of advertisement by using babies in advertisements of baby shampoo, funny cats in advertisements of cat food or a lovely cow in advertisement for dairy products! In fact this dairy product manufacturer has gained great popularity by its creative advertisements, using two inventive principles is another indicator of its inventiveness.



Figure 2: another inventive principle in the same dairy product advertisement

- In *Universality*, principle 5, new functions from one or more elements of the current product or service are expected. For example a TV advertisement can be broken down into several elements. We can mention a few of them: name of product (brand), customer, manufacturer and its brand, and also elements of the media such as music, background, the method of using that product shown in the advertisement, performer of the advertisement, description of the product and etc. These elements are included in each advertisement as appropriate. Using universality principle, we can add new functions beside the current function to each present element. For example we can add the function of describing characteristics of product to the product itself, making an speaking product. So an animated apple will tell you that *an apple a day, keeps doctor away* and so on.



Fig 3: the orator apple

- Now! How to show our advertisement audience how tasty our ice cream is? What can we do if we want a guy in the advertisement to nibble a bar of ice cream and suddenly his eyes blows out in pleasure, his hair straightens and? Yes! use of the animation , cartoons and computerized simulation is the answer and it is also a reminder of the principle 27 ,*use of inexpensive copy instead of the expensive original*.
- *Prior action*, principle 10, includes seeing future needs, now, and applying remedies (and establishing facilities) for them. By minimizing the time lapse between seeing advertisements and buying the product or service, we have taken a big step towards creating a success story. This involves facilitating the process of ordering. Prepaid postage subscription cards and also accepting orders by phone and getting paid in time of delivery at customer's residence are such examples.



Fig 4: An advertisement of free home delivery, which recently has gained popularity in Iran.

- Trend of an advertisement is often set in such a way to convince that the use of the product will improve customer's position, character, class, etc. But some advertisements became long-lasting by using the *reverse trend*. For example when in an advertisement a meeting is turned to a mess as a result of chairman's cell phone ringing with a special tone (voice of his son!). It could remind us principle 12+1! (Reverse action).



Fig 5: have a skunk and get rid of bothersome persons; Yes! Reverse action works!

- When it is not that interesting to show a product or its use (changing diapers for example) we have no choice but to use inventive principle 24, using *mediators*. For example to show the baby laughing with satisfaction and to use song and music. We can also use a conceptual mediator, a popular and lovely actor; character, tale, etc can be used to make some sort of trust and familiarity in customer. In an advertisement first Pinocchio appears with very untidy hair, a total mess in other words. Narrator asks him that why he hasn't washed his hair. His answer is: "I've washed them and I have used ABC shampoos to wash my hair". Then as a result, the famous nose is getting bigger and bigger! These are all mediators, bridges between product and customer. Use of luxurious backgrounds and furniture in cigarette advertisements or attractive girls as models are some other examples.



Fig 6: Pinocchio, a familiar character, is used as a mediator to make customer sure of product's excellence.

- Then we come across the famous nested doll! It means putting things in each other, saving material, time and space and also increasing efficiency. In an advertisement Grandpa has gone mad with peculiar noise of grandson's rocking chair. then he applies a drop of glue to the leg of the chair, suddenly chair is pasted to the ground and he gets rid of the noise and you also tend to buy some of this nice glue! As you see the advertisement is placed "inside" a story. In the same manner, some companies advertise their products in TV serials: a famous and popular actor in a serial has a cell phone of specified brand and so on.

- *Equipotentiality*, what does it have to do with advertisements? By its original definition this inventive principle means putting two inter-related systems in the same level so that effort necessary for transmission of material (objects or streams) between them can be reduced or nearly eliminated. In advertisements, all elements can be arranged in a manner that customer sees obviously some kind of "similarity" between himself & the guy represented in the advertisement. In fact he feels himself in the same status or *level*. As a result, more likely he/she will think of the product or service as a useful one deciding to purchase it. Use of photos of catastrophically impaired teeth in the advertisements of restorative dentistry or bald people in advertisements of hairpiece, are such examples.



Fig 7: Equipotentiality, impaired teeth just like yours! Can be treated like this!

Now it's time for readers to try to find footprints of TRIZ principles in the following selected advertisements:

- ☆ In advertisement of an insurance company, first we see a broken jar and a jumping fish facing death. Then the same fish is shown in a new jar with insurance company's logo on it.



Fig 8: very popular advertisement of insurance company (logo has been removed).

- ☆ A beverage manufacturer first put a giant picture of a tiger in the center of a billboard for three months after that they added a brand name to the previous logo (the tiger) two month later they introduced the product which was then very curious.

- ☆ Just before a popular TV serial begins, a manufacturer in its advertisement wishes that you enjoy the serial. After the end of the serial, the same company again as an unusual advertisement, hopes that you have enjoyed it.
- ☆ In another advertisement a man is carrying a radial tire and whenever he approaches anyone in his way, he asks him if he knows a noble car to suit it?
- ☆ Traffic office in its advertisements first shows a short animation of a guilty driver doing several offenses then asks the audience to ring them and by numbering those crimes participate in the contest!

Conclusion

Out of 22 advertisements which were selected as brilliant ones by interviewees, in 16 cases we could see a footprint of inventive techniques (the sample was consisting of about 330 advertisements). In some cases something more than just a footprint was found, and in some other cases the footprint was a little *fuzzy*. But considering the whole thing, it seems that inventive principles even in their technical definitions have a good provoking character. It can be a core competence for anyone who is involved in design or execution of advertisements to use these rather *magical* Inventive principles.

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About the authors:

Reza Movarrei: He is currently an instructor at project management research and development center in PIDMCo where he along with his colleagues is working on research projects defined to facilitate continuous improvement of some 1.5 billion USD petrochemical projects handled by PIDMCo each year in Iran. His former career was in field of MIS within petrochemical industries of Iran. He has translated some

three books about management science to Farsi. He is also author of a book and several articles mostly in the field of project management and also innovation. He got interested in TRIZ for the first time when he read "the innovation algorithm" the brilliant book written by Mr. Altshuller. His academic background has been in field of industrial engineering.

Sara Vessal: Graduating as an honorable industrial engineer from Iran University of Science and Technology, she began her career first in auto industries. After spending some years there, she began developing interest in risk and safety management especially in projects so at the same time she shifted her occupation to newborn safety committee of ministry of roads and transportations. Her research works has mainly been in marketing and project management. She is translator of two books in field of project management and also author of several articles.