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Context Thinking is a mental accelerator for brand messages

Too much diversity shapes our everyday lives. We have too much of everything: too much information, too much choice, too many different stimuli. It is not an easy task for advertising to penetrate the memory of us consumers with brand messages.

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Now consumer studies often come to the conclusion that a general There is advertising fatigue: "complaints" are annoying and are - if possible - not - simply switched away. Only in a few moments are the senses open to brand messages. This has a devastating effect on brand loyalty: More than two thirds of ~~consumers~~ basically not care if a large part of the brands disappeared from the market.

No mental link without advertising!

We know very well that brand building is impossible without communication. Everything about a brand communicates and communication takes place via different ways (and channels).

Recent publications by the renowned Ehrenberg-Bass Institute confirm once again that, on balance, brands that communicate are more successful than those that consciously avoid advertising in the broadest sense. The marketing expert **Mark Ritson** was also able to prove through studies that this effect is even stronger when we are in



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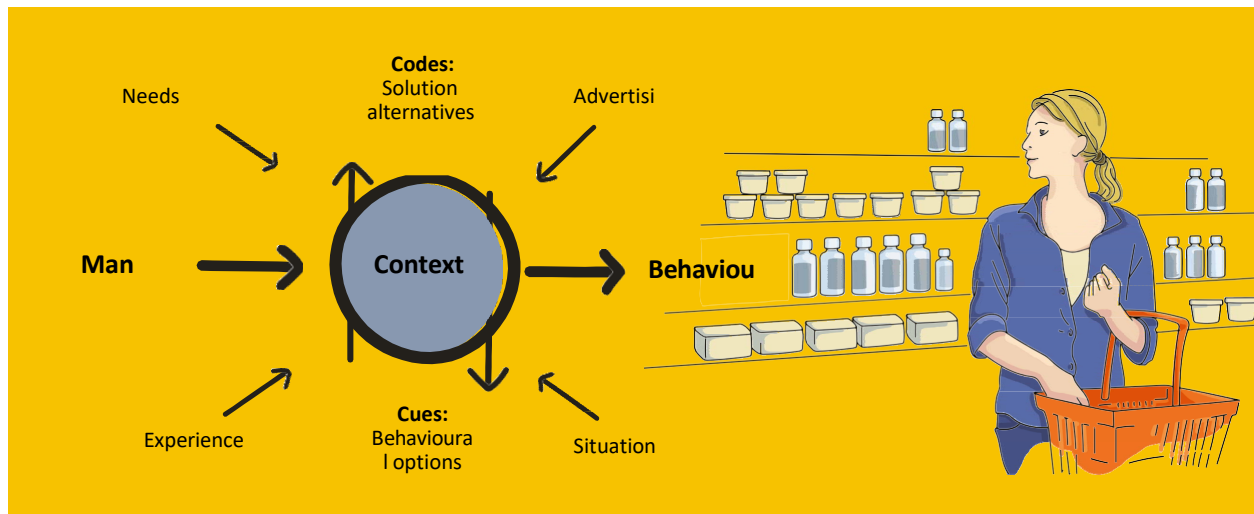
Ralph Ohnemus has been a board member and major shareholder of K&A Brand Research since 2001. The CEO has decades of marketing and sales experience on the international stage in senior management.

crisis situations (e.g. corona, recession).

Advertising is therefore necessary for long-term brand management. According to **Byron Sharp**, in addition to physical availability (distribution), the mental availability of brands is an indispensable must-have for sustainable brand communication: a few, but distinct brand assets that can be retrieved by consumers as brand codes and assigned to a brand and its situational use would be helpful. The importance of codifying and branding brands through communication measures is often perceived as a necessary but not very creative duty compared to the creative performance of a commercial. However, it is a fact that only for very few branded companies (even for many with "a lot of advertising") 4 to 5 Distinctive Brand Assets can be proven that category buyers can actually assign to a brand without support.

Context Thinking and Behavioural Economics

In order to position brands more strongly mentally in people's everyday lives, a Context Thinking-oriented approach is needed.

Fig. 1: Context thinking as management of codes in contexts

Brand research is based on the everyday life of its target customers and on the everyday contexts in which a brand can ideally offer a quick, simple and efficient solution. This approach can be traced back to two people who, although different in their scientific approach to understanding human behaviour, complement each other in their results.

On the one hand, the renowned quantitative brand researcher

Byron Sharp, who decisively shaped the concept of the mental availability of markets and the necessity of strong brand assets. On the other hand, **Daniel Kahneman** is the best-known representative of behavioural economics, who shaped the current state of the art of scientific psychology like no other and received the Nobel Prize for Economics for his work. Both of them proved several times that only simplifications of decisions can be

lead to changes in behaviour (and purchase). And that situational shortcuts alone are formative for everyday decisions.

Purchase decisions and brand selection also take place with minimal mental effort. The famous System 1 autopilot relieves us very efficiently of everyday decisions. Any buried drives, inner children, purpose or other mystifications of Freudian depth psychology play no role in most decisions.

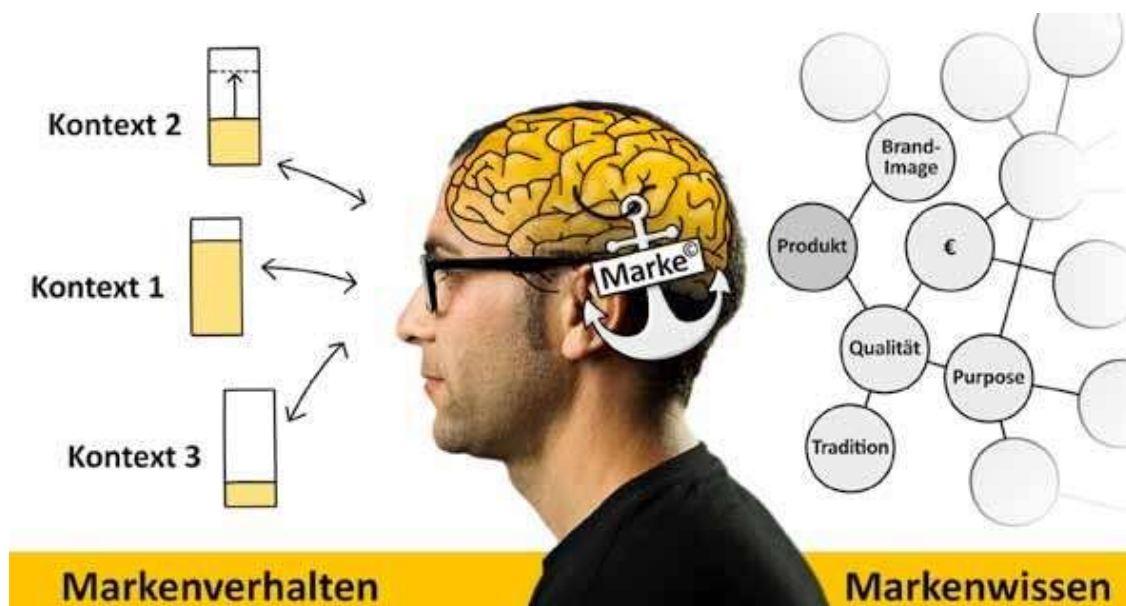
Fig. 2: Context matters: better to think of brands in situations than to know a lot about them!

Fig. 3: Context Communication by Ferrero using the example of Yogurette

As a context thinker, we think more from the perspective of the consumer and his or her everyday situations. Our decision-making behaviour is shaped by our own experiences, situational needs and desires as well as various key stimuli (cues and codes). In a concrete situation or under certain contextual conditions, a certain behaviour occurs (Fig. 1). Advertising can make an important contribution to contextual relevance.

Context Communication works (better) ...

Today, in an age of information overload and too much variety, it is much more important that consumers think of a brand at all in certain situations than that they know a lot about a brand in depth.

People buy for certain occasions or in a certain context. These occasions automatically call up the brands that experience has shown to be suitable. Shoppers do not first think of brands (profiles) and compare them with others. There is no time for this, it would be inefficient for our System 1 brain.

In classic market research, image and brand status analyses are often used to ask consumers what properties a brand has or does not have. Consumers are usually well-behaved - and answer the questions cognitively according to their best knowledge, attitude and conscience. Unfortunately, attitudes and knowledge (or better: ignorance) have little to do with actual behaviour. Unaided, consumers usually know frighteningly little about brand positioning, what constitutes the quality of a brand and other marketing mix elements (Fig. 2).

Insight formulations or sophisticated brand positioning unfortunately have little to do with the everyday life of potential customers. An understanding of the significance of brands for very specific contexts would be much closer to everyday life (Fig. 2).

Since people always evaluate words, images and also brands "in the context of something" and behave accordingly, strategic thinking in contexts and consumption occasions helps: Particularly when desired situations are not yet being experienced in the desired way.

are linked to a brand (cf. Fig. 2).

Consistent brand management, which has been able to anchor distinct assets in the human brain through consistent branding, makes it easier to achieve brand trust (fame) on the one hand, and on the other hand, communication of contexts is faster and usually more behaviourally responsive on the part of consumers.

People think according to occasions and contextualise them. However, they rarely think and structure according to brands and categories in cross-comparison. From our point of view, it would be better to look for situational shortcuts in a communicative way, so that a brand comes to mind more quickly as an everyday solution through a contextual approach. Like Yogurette, for example: with a new summery line extension and the implicated contextual claim of being the ideal summer chocolate (Fig. 3). In any case, proof (among many others) that "context communication works" ...