

## Peer Review

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### AdCracker Advertising Creative

by Steve McNamara

Ratings	
<b>Overall Rating:</b>	☆☆☆☆☆
<b>Content Quality:</b>	☆☆☆☆☆
<b>Effectiveness:</b>	☆☆☆☆☆
<b>Ease of Use:</b>	☆☆☆☆☆

**Reviewed:** Jul 27, 2007 by Business Editorial Board

**Overview:** Ad Cracker is a commercial website geared towards helping marketers and advertisers with the creative process. This site is a collection of tools to support the creative process and advertising strategy. The site also contains entertaining video clips to re-emphasize and visualize the concepts that are communicated in print.

**Learning Goals:** The primary purpose of this site is to expose users to various tools that can be used to generate creative ideas. A secondary purpose is to showcase concept development, advertising examples, and creative productivity.

**Target Student Population:** Undergraduate and graduate students of marketing, advertising, promotion, integrated marketing communications.

**Prerequisite Knowledge or Skills:** An introduction to marketing or principles of advertising course would be helpful but is not required.

**Type of Material:** The site includes a collection of advertising techniques as well as brand, positioning and direct response examples for B2B and B2C. The examples include print, internet, and TV commercials. The "IdeaMachine" provides a fun and interactive tool to generate creative ideas.

**Recommended Use:** This module has a great deal of flexibility and adaptability due to the vast amount of interesting content. Students can be assigned certain parts of the website to use with an exercise or assignment. It can also be used as a resource for students doing an advertising/promotional campaign or IMC Plan. The material can be used both in and out of the classroom to facilitate either individual or group work. There are video spots that would be very appropriate during lectures or presentations and certainly could facilitate class discussion and presentation.

**Technical Requirements:** It would be helpful to have a high-speed internet connection.

### Evaluation and Observation

#### Content Quality

Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆

**Strengths:** The tools and resources found within this website provide a great amount of flexibility for both the student and the instructor. Some of the tools include: how to write a creative brief, how to create and characterize a brand, how to position a product, how to create a communications strategy, how to write an advertising plan, and how ads make people think. The resources provided at this website are versatile and can be used in a variety of courses (advertising, integrated marketing communications, promotion). This site would be well suited to accompany study in an online course, as all resources are available online. This site would also be an excellent resource for project work in an advertising and/or promotion seminar that included a client project as the information has an applied orientation. Although there is a good amount of material to explain a variety of concepts, the material is not overwhelming in its presentation.

**Concerns:** The "Ad Cracker" complete game must be purchased but there is special pricing for students and teachers. Although the site has a variety of tools to be applied to the development of an ad campaign, the instructor, most likely, would need to provide students with cohesive theoretical background to support the design process. Additionally, there is no reference to the research process and the role it plays in advertising strategy. The topics are interesting and certainly relevant; most of the information provided, however, seems to be grounded in professional experience versus scholarship and academic research.

Potential Effectiveness  
as a Teaching Tool

Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆

**Strengths:** The effectiveness depends on how the instructor presents and uses the material. If students are asked to explore the site on their own, they can get lost and overwhelmed. A more effective use of this site would be for the instructor to specifically highlight the parts of the site that are most relevant to the assignment or lesson at hand.

**Concerns:** Educators could use this site to complement existing course material, however, they should be aware of the fact that this site does not contain ready-to-use exercises. Again, instructors should be wary of the fact that the resources presented do not provide comprehensive exposure to the topic of advertising strategy. Much of what is presented on this site provides the view from the "creative" perspective. If used in a marketing course, the "marketing" perspectives should also be included as well (e.g., profit, sales, ROI, etc.)

Ease of Use for Both  
Students and Faculty

Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆

**Strengths:** The site is broken up into many small segments of content. Because of its modular presentation, it allows instructors to customize a course or assignment quite easily. This site is well organized, and there are a variety of topics which could be adapted to different courses. Students could use the material in or outside of class to explore topics, and many of the resources certainly could facilitate team work as well. The site is visually appealing and material is simplistically presented. The video clips are informative but also entertaining. There is logical progression of topics without a lot of "flash" and other sidebar disruptions.

**Concerns:** This site is an excellent resource for advertising strategy development. Although many of the pages provide video on demand, there are some pages that require users to purchase the Ad cracker CD, which may impede comprehensive use of this site for educational purposes. As noted earlier, some parts of the site require users to pay for the content. However, the majority of the resources and tools on the site are free.

Other Issues and None.  
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