

MM&M's Best DTC Ads Ever

The days of 350-million-dollar TV spending may be gone, but top DTC campaigns must still be tied to unique insights. And, as Deborah Dick-Rath finds, the best are. Here's the top 10, based on an informal survey of industry leaders (Go to mmm-online.com for the commercial reels):



1 Vytroin: "Two Kinds of Cholesterol." This campaign from Merck and its agency DDB garnered the most votes. Everyone remembered the dual visuals that matched a food with a person, and most respondents commented on how this succinctly tied brand to benefit.

2 Claritin: "Blue Skies." A true DTC classic, complete with an Ella Fitzgerald and Irving Berlin accompaniment. This campaign was one of the first to be completely integrated across multiple channels with its "free breathing" clouds. Congrats to Ogilvy CommonHealth Worldwide's wide-ranging team of experts.

3 Zolof: "Dot." This innovative campaign garnered many votes for its unique, empathetic and influential art direction. This beautiful campaign forever destigmatized a disease. As Adam Levine, SVP Strategy at Deutsch, comments, "It created a new standard for what DTC could be."

4 Lamisil: "Digger." An animated dermatophyte drove Novartis toenail fungus medicine to a billion-dollar franchise. It was an ad that everyone remembered—perhaps uncomfortably so. It was also a campaign with "legs" that even won attention on the talk shows.

6 Spiriva: "Elephant." This current campaign was another one to leverage anthropomorphic imagery to quickly communicate an idea. In this case, Draftfcb integrated the Elephant into the COPD campaign for impactful effect and top results at Boehringer-Ingelheim.

8 Lipitor: "Belly Flop." Pfizer's blockbuster drug has had many campaigns over the years—but our respondents reminded us that the "Belly Flop," circa 2003, seemed to offer patients absolution if diet and exercise just didn't work.

10 Lunesta: "Luna Moth." Respondents cited this campaign's overpowering and ubiquitous imagery, and its ability to connect a "lunar" creature for sleeplessness offers a bit of mnemonic to the brand name. We can't imagine it with an owl.

5 Zelnorm: "Tummies." Just as music helped Claritin soar, Fatboy Slim helped Novartis' IBS drug stand out. The commercial provocatively showed sufferers raising their shirts to reveal hand-lettered symptomology on their tummies. Hard to forget.

7 Nasonex: "Bee." Using an animated bee to remind people about hay fever and allergies was clever—giving him the suave voice of Antonio Banderas was brilliant. This multi-channel campaign pulled all the sight, sound and motion levers of memorability.

9 Boniva: "Sally Field." This celebrity-based campaign's linkage between brand and spokesperson directly aligned with Boomer women who remembered Field from "Gidget" to "Norma Rae." As Abelson Taylor SVP Jay Carter notes, "The right person for the job."