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## You May Walk Like a Duck and Quack Like a Duck, But You're No Duck!

By **John Mack**

There are two kinds of marketers—brand marketers and direct marketers. At least that is how Jon Roska, CEO & Chief Creative Officer of Roska Direct, a Montgomeryville, PA direct advertising agency, sees the world. The question is, Can they work together to provide pharmaceutical clients with the best of both worlds? Roska explores this question in “Ducks in the Henhouse: The Challenges of Integrating Direct and Brand Advertising,” a short monograph/booklet based upon a PowerPoint presentation he has honed over the years.

According to Roska's analogy, brand marketers are hens (i.e., chickens) and direct marketers are ducks and both vie for the attention of the farmer (i.e., pharma client).

### Brand Advertising vs. Direct Advertising

It probably comes as no surprise to readers that there is conflict in the world of ducks and chickens. Reading the book reminded me a bit of Orwell's Animal Farm—but in that book the animals are trying to overthrow the farmer whereas in Roska's book the animals compete for the farmer's attention and largesse. Pharma marketers—whether on the farm or in real life—have only one trough to feed from and money to feed the ducks ultimately comes out of the mouths of the chickens. We're talking about real money here. Roska estimates that more than 50% of all marketing spending in the U.S.—about \$155 Billion—now goes to direct response marketing.

The chickens aren't taking this sitting down and they have tried various strategies to compete with the ducks, including assimilation. But before we get to that, let's define what makes a “chicken” a chicken and a “duck” a duck.

### Brand Marketing

The American Marketing Association defines a brand as “a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers.” Roska, however, prefers the way Walter Landor,

who helped create and develop such famous brands as Coca-Cola, defined a brand as a “promise.” “By identifying and authenticating a product or service, it delivers a pledge of satisfaction and quality.”

### Direct Marketing

Direct marketing, on the other hand, is broadly defined by the Direct Marketing Association as “any direct communication to a consumer or business recipient that is designed to generate a response in the form of an order (direct order), a request for further information (lead generation), and/or visit to a store or other place of business for purchase of a specific product or service (traffic generation).”

“Direct seems so clinical,” says Roska, “while brand seems to have an aura about it.”

Using the analogy of a farmer as the client, Roska explains that brand advertising sells the reputation of the farm, whereas direct advertising sells the products the farm produces. Put this way, it seems that there should be room for both chickens and ducks to do their thing on the farm, but it doesn't often work out that way.

### Can a Duck Work for Chickens?

What's life on the farm like for chickens and ducks these days? The chickens—brand marketers—seem to have it made. They are up in the barnyard having a great time, partying their brains out and getting all the big accounts. This makes some ducks jealous and wish they could join the chickens in the henhouse. “There's nothing as sad as a duck, trying to be a chicken,” say Roska. But ducks—even those trying to be chickens— invariably ask questions like, “How do we know if this campaign is successful?” and “What's the ROI on this program going to be?”

These sorts of questions about measuring effectiveness of advertising don't sit well with chickens, according to Roska. Nevertheless, sometimes chickens realize they need a duck—especially when their clients start asking about “relationship marketing.” They may take a duck to

meetings with clients and the duck will say all the right things to convince the client that he or she will finally be getting some duck advertising. But back at the coop, the chickens stifle the duck and continue to produce chicken advertising.

### **How About a Chicken in Duck Clothing?**

“The worst thing I have seen happen, due to the increase in demand of duck advertising,” says Roska, “is ‘the chicken in duck clothing’.” He explains how it happens:

The chicken's client keeps hearing about duck advertising. He reads about testing and database marketing, customer relationships and targeting, but he really doesn't understand it. So he goes to his chicken agency and says he wants to implement a duck advertising campaign. The chickens freak out, because this means that the client wants readable results; he wants a projectable return on investment!

The chickens aren't going to lose this account to a bunch of dirty ducks, so they make their move. They grab one of their chickens, who has been displaying duck tendencies and they dress him up like a duck. They have him read a copy of Seth Godin's, "Permission Marketing" or Stan Rapp's "Maxi Marketing" and trot him out in front of the client.

About a year later, after several millions of ad budget has been pissed away, the client realizes that the chickens have pulled a fast one on him and he calls in a team of real ducks.

### **So What's Wrong with Chicken Advertising Anyway?**

Brand advertisers build awareness and they promise their clients that if they sell the brand successfully, product sales will follow. The problem is many selling points often fall between the lines, according to direct marketers like Roska. Clients sometimes wonder also if the chickens are making ads for themselves in order to gain recognition in the advertising world (e.g., awards).

### **Viaduct? What Ducks Say**

Ducks say that the farmer shouldn't be selling the farms' image—he should develop an ongoing relationship with his customers and “bring the brand to life.” Ducks point out the obvious—what products the farm has to offer, what the products can do for the customer, and where to go get them. Just to make sure this is understood, ducks explain it three different ways to customers!

Roska suggests that if you answer “yes” to each of the following questions, you're a duck:

1. Do you test?
2. Is your advertising accountable?
3. Do you project ROI?
4. Do you use databases?

“If you're not doing all of the above,” says Roska, “you're just mailing advertising.”

### **Fusion Marketing**

The future, according to Roska, is a merger of both brand and direct marketing. Clients want to know which half of their advertising works—they want accountability. “Direct marketing,” suggests Roska, “is the half that works.” But what is really needed is a “fusion” of brand and direct marketing.

The purpose of Roska's book is not to teach brand and direct marketers how to work together. Rather, Roska suggests that ducks need to apply branding techniques to their own work for clients—become a fusion agency.

Why couldn't brand agencies embrace direct marketing techniques and also become fusion agencies? For one thing, claims Roska, brand-trained people fear confidentiality issues and fear to use relationship marketing lest they violate privacy laws. Direct marketers, on the other hand, have a lot of experience with privacy issues and have learned how to work within the law and take advantage of the benefits of relationship marketing (see article on Optas in this issue).

### **PMs Need DM Education**

“Fifteen years ago,” quips Roska, “pharmaceutical marketing executives would tell me, ‘Jon, a direct marketing agency will never be an agency of record at a pharmaceutical company.’” Today, Roska Direct is the agency of record for several major pharma companies and direct marketing is a chunky slice of most pharma marketing pies.

You would think, therefore, that pharmaceutical product managers would be trained in the techniques of direct marketing. Unfortunately, this may not be the case. Roska says that only about 10% of 4-year business school programs teach direct marketing and product managers have no educational experience in this field.

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