

TITLE OF CASE STUDY: Accenture

The case study can not exceed 5 written pages in 11 point font. The case study should explain the business opportunity and objectives, the research story behind campaign development, a description of the campaign, and proof of business results (please see Entry Kit for more details). *Proprietary data can be disguised.*

Winners are able to submit an alternate version of the case study excluding sensitive information for use in public communications.

Background: Standing Out In A Complex Category

Accenture is a global Business Consulting, Technology Services and Outsourcing company competing with the likes of IBM, Bearing Point, EDS, CapGeminiErnst&Young, and McKinsey for large strategic and technology consulting contracts, with the most lucrative being multi-year engagements worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

As one might imagine, in this category the buying process is incredibly complex and lengthy and involves the most senior members of an organization. In most instances, multiple decision makers take part in the consultant selection process and selling in an engagement usually encompasses a number of different stages over the course of many months, sometimes years. With many competitors in the field, differentiation is the key to gaining awareness and consideration, the first step in the buying process.

Program Objectives: Get Noticed and Get On The Short List!

The primary goal of Accenture communications is to keep the company's name front and center with buyers and to do so in a unique and relevant way. So when the decision is made to hire a consultant, Accenture wants to make sure it is included on the short list of companies that their target will call.

Specifically, the overarching objective is to increase awareness and consideration of Accenture as the consulting leader that delivers high performance.

There were two distinct goals in addressing this objective:

Goal 1 Break through the clutter, get noticed and register its key messages (despite being outspent 8:1 on a global basis by a key competitor, IBM).

Given that IBM heavily outspends Accenture, the company had to find a way to make an impact with fewer funds. It needed a highly differentiated and relevant message with an executional treatment that would quickly get noticed.

Goal 2 Get Accenture on the target's consideration list when they are thinking of companies to hire for large scale consulting engagements.

The advertising needed to move the needle on the consideration measure – getting buyers to say that they would place Accenture on their short list of companies they would call for consulting services.

Developing A Breakthrough Communications Program: Uncovering The Creative Hook

Throughout every step of the way, Accenture employed both qualitative and quantitative research in the development and evaluation of its communications program. Qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews among the Senior Executive target and Accenture employees was used extensively in developing the strategy and fine-tuning the campaign approach from both a creative and media standpoint and common strategy. Quantitative research in the form of in-market tracking techniques and sales information was employed in the measurement of the campaign once it reached the marketplace.

For Accenture communications, the target is the crème de la crème of the corporate world. We are talking about the “C-Suite” – the CEO, CFO, CIO, CMO and strategic heads of various divisions in the corporate structure. And since Accenture concentrates on large scale consulting engagements, these individuals are found in large multi-national companies like Ford, AT&T and Citibank. Essentially the target bulls-eye for Accenture’s messages are the leaders of the Global 2000 companies.

Accenture believes that the most powerful communications revolve around an inherent truth or insight about the target, brand or marketplace. It is this insight or truth that eventually becomes the core of the message and the hook that various communication programs can tie into. And since the campaign runs in 27 countries around the world, that hook must be *universally* differentiating and relevant – no small task.

Essentially, what Accenture set out to do is own the category benefit. It’s a strategy that many category leaders undertake – Coke owns refreshment, Nike owns athletic excellence, and Budweiser owns fresh tasting beer. The generic core benefit in the consulting category is helping clients succeed in the marketplace. So Accenture coined the term “High Performance Business” to brand the unique type of success they provide to their clients. Accenture is all about delivering innovation that enables their clients to become High Performance Businesses.

Qualitative research confirmed that the High Performance Business term was indeed a powerful and relevant descriptor of the core category benefit. While most of the target would not characterize their corporations as high performing businesses today, it is definitely something that they all aspire to. It is at the heart of what they do in their jobs and what they strive to accomplish in the long term. And the beauty of High Performance Business is that it is a term that was broad enough to allow every individual to read into it his/her own personal definition of success whether it be improving a business process, increased revenue, larger market share or a higher stock price.

The Creative Strategy: Accenture Helps Clients Become High Performance Businesses

Accenture’s creative strategy is clear, focused and straightforward. It puts Accenture’s differentiating promise (High Performance Business) front and center. But the strategy is not where the magic is. The magic came in the selection of Tiger Woods to serve as a contemporary symbol of High Performance.

Tiger is the epitome of High Performance in all that he does. Unlike other advertisers who use Tiger Woods simply to endorse their product, Accenture uses Tiger as a metaphor for High Performance and this is what makes the work differentiated and relevant. He encapsulates all the benefits Accenture brings to their clients – focus, commitment and continual improvement to get them to become a High Performance Business. The campaign attitude is summed up in the rally cry of the advertising: “Go On. Be A Tiger”.

Making Sure The Communications Hit Home

Once the communications began taking shape, Accenture launched into an extensive qualitative research project to ensure that the campaign was on target. Focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted in nine countries at all stages of the advertising development process for both print and television: rough ideas, animatics, rough-cut finished film and finished advertising were all tested. In addition, research was conducted with both the target and the internal audience of Accenture Senior Executives.

Overall, the research said the following:

- The connection is immediately made between the strategy and the target. Tiger Woods is a High Performer and personifies the benefits that Accenture can bring to their clients.
- It captures the personality the target wants in the consultants they hire. It is clever, smart, and innovative.
- It is differentiating in the category. It is straightforward and uses Tiger Woods as more than a celebrity presenter. He is the embodiment of what it means to be a High Performer, Accenture's core message.
- It is leader-like. It portrayed Accenture in a highly favorable light. Tiger Woods is a leader and so is Accenture.

Guiding The Media Exposure: Doing More With Less

Accenture was well aware that it was being outspent quite heavily by IBM, a key competitor. Not only did it want to break through from a creative standpoint, but Accenture also realized that it needed to spend its media dollars in places where the competition wasn't. There was a clear need to discover different ways to reach the target than the traditional cluttered business vehicles.

Accenture's marketing and communications strategy was to surround the target where he/she lives, works and plays. Accenture realized that it needed to spend its communication dollars in places where the competition wasn't. There was a clear need to discover different ways to reach the target in addition to the traditional cluttered business vehicles.

Appearing in 27 countries, the communications ran on a variety of leading television business and sports programming; in newspapers, business and news magazines, airports and online; and on outdoor billboards. The campaign has accelerated awareness of Accenture's new positioning and helped lay claim to High Performance Delivered ahead of Accenture's competitors.

Tracking Success In The Marketplace

In a category where each engagement can take months and even years to negotiate and complete, it is difficult to equate marketing spending directly to sales dollars in any linear way. While Accenture does measure sales annually in relation to communications and spending activity to gain some insight into effectiveness, other measures play a more important role in assessing return on investment.

Specifically, Accenture believes that the role of its communications program is to keep its name front and center in a differentiated way. So when the time comes for the target to select a consulting partner, Accenture is on top of the consideration list. So measures like awareness and consideration are better gauges of the effect of its marketing efforts than direct sales.

But Accenture goes beyond the traditional tracking measures in attempt to attach some deeper meaning to its data. Specifically, it tries to show the relationship between awareness and consideration as well as overlay spending on to awareness to demonstrate how efficient the spending is.

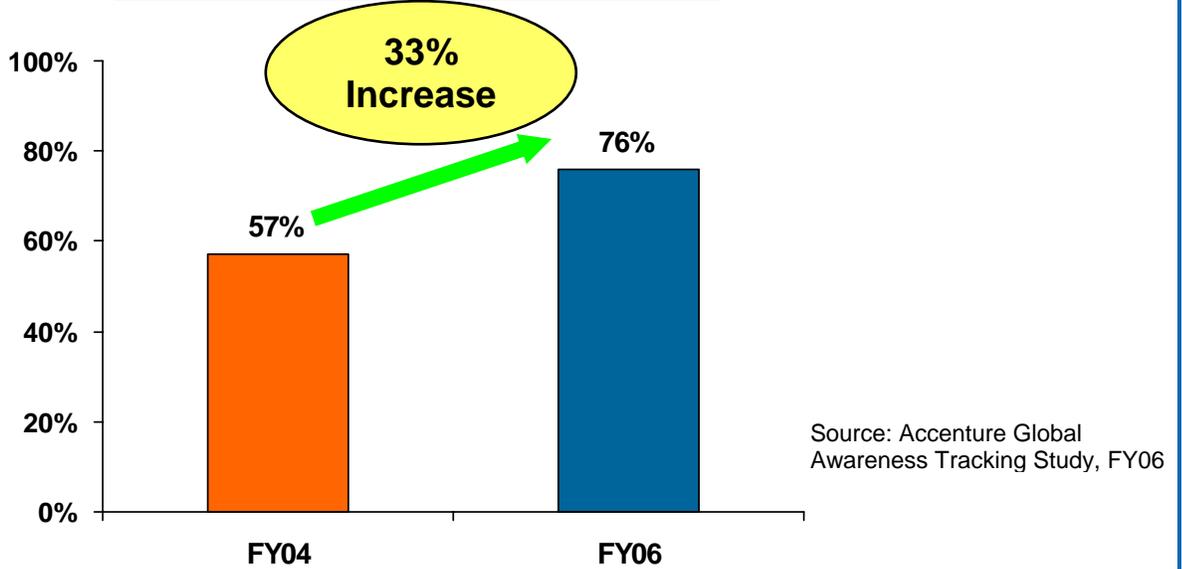
The results have been nothing less than outstanding for the “Go On. Be A Tiger” communications program. Specifically:

- Despite being outspent substantially, Accenture has managed to break through with a focused campaign coupled with a targeted media plan. Brand awareness during the time the campaign ran was up dramatically.
- Accenture’s television and print advertising is breaking through the clutter much more efficiently than that of any of its competitors. Accenture has a much lower cost-per-awareness point than any of its competitors.
- Seeing Accenture advertising in virtually all countries triples the target’s propensity to consider Accenture for their next consulting engagement.

Appendix- Specific Tracking Results

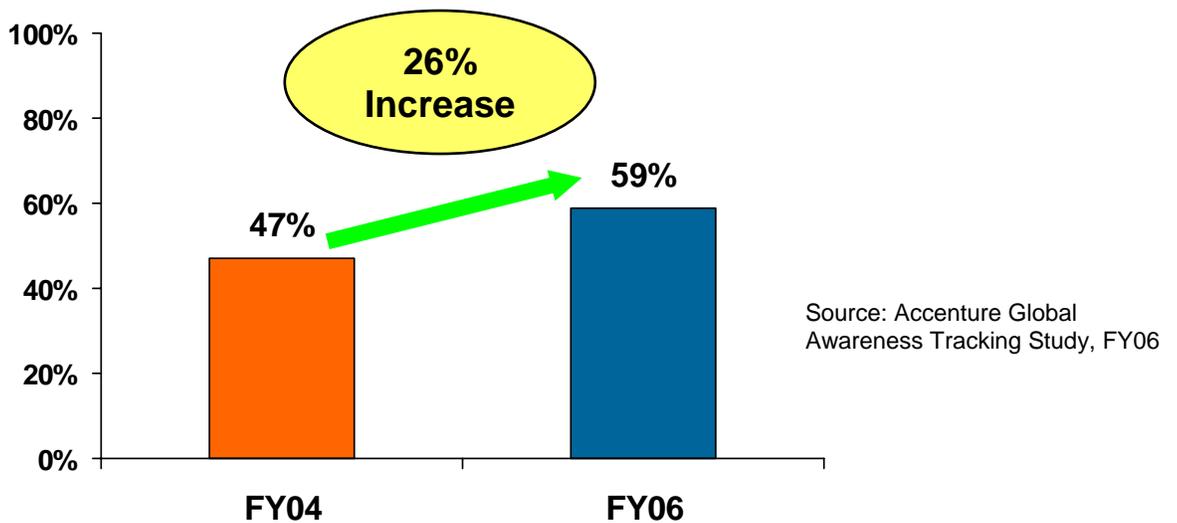
- Accenture’s “Go On. Be A Tiger” campaign has driven significant increases in brand awareness, despite being heavily outspent by competitors.

Accenture Unaided US Brand Awareness



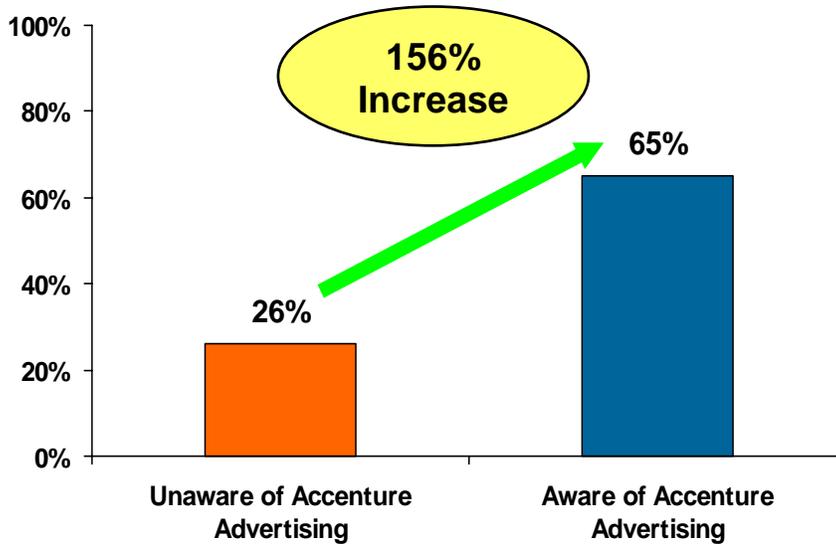
- The Accenture communications program has clearly made the intended association to the core strategic premise of High Performance Business.

Association with High Performance Business



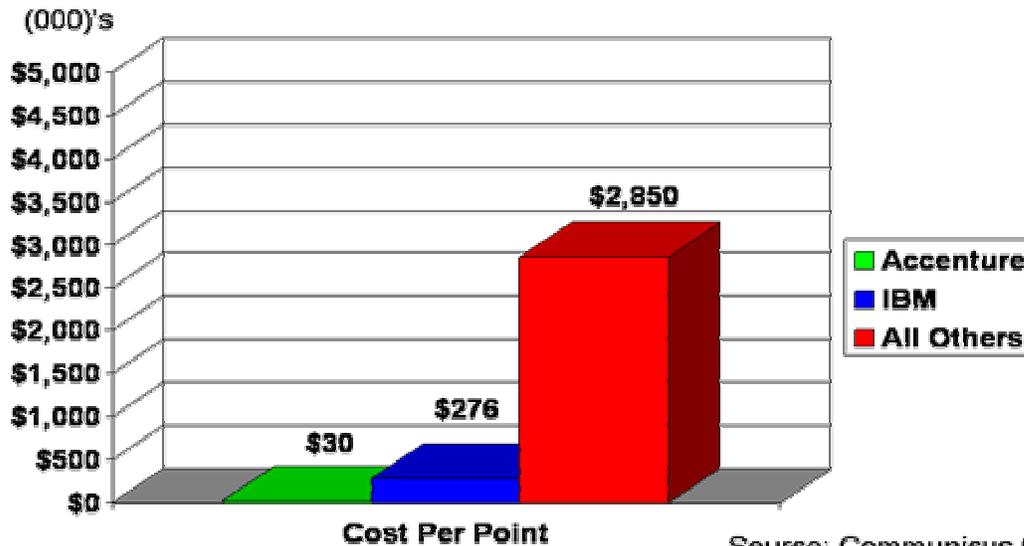
- Those who are aware of Accenture’s advertising are more than twice as likely to consider the brand for their next consulting engagement.

Accenture Consideration Rate by Advertising Awareness



- Lastly, Accenture’s communications program is breaking through the clutter much more efficiently than that of any of its competitors.

Cost Per Proven Recall Point
(Have Seen the Ad and Correctly Identify the Brand)



Source: Communicus 04/05