

**Campaign Title: The Schwab Guide to Moving On**

**Brand: Charles Schwab**

**Company(s) Involved: CP+B**

**Category: New Audiences**

## **Summary**

Charles Schwab wanted to attract more affluent investors; not an easy task with Schwab's discount broker heritage and when most affluent investors are already locked in 10-plus-year relationships with their current firms. Our judo move? Rather than criticizing competitors, we challenged investors to question their own decisions and gave them the tools they needed to break up with the past.

Our initiatives disrupted the category and helped propel Schwab to leadership in a relatively short time. The campaign contributed to a double-digit growth rate in New-To-Firm affluent households between September 2014 and September 2015. Not only did Schwab successfully raise awareness of its wealth management offering, by Q2 2015 it had outperformed the affluent category average on consideration and favorability compared to the prior year.

## Marketing Challenge

The business challenge was to attract more affluent clientele to the brand: investors with \$500K-\$2 million in investable assets. This was a segment with very different needs and expectations from the typical Schwab base.

To appeal to this new class of clientele, our biggest marketing challenge was to shift their perception of Schwab from a discount brokerage for the masses to a Wealth Management firm that offers high-quality investment advice. In a category where prestigious, old-time firms like Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley often use scale and complexity as their competitive advantages to lure new clients, we needed a new symbol of re-evaluation to invite their consideration.

Given that most of the affluent investors were already in a serious relationship with their current advisors and firms for over 10 years, our communications had to provoke them to re-evaluate those long-held relationships and consider placing their funds – and trust – in Schwab. To use a dating analogy, Schwab was that person you always vaguely liked, but would never imagine as a prospect for a serious relationship.

## Methodology

**1. Ethnography Research:** Our in-depth Ethnography Research revealed that there was so much more to the affluent investors than what might be perceived based on their wealth or demographics. What we found was that most of our audience actually came from humble backgrounds and achieved success because they were extraordinarily rigorous about living below their means from day one. We called these folks **The Driven** because they were constantly engaged – with their families, their communities and the issues that mattered – and were always ready to raise their hand to help.

**2. Cultural Investigation:** We stepped outside our category and did a semiotic analysis of the codes of related categories. When we looked at the aura of complexity, mystery and arcane knowledge that surrounded the business of investing, we were struck by the resemblance to seemingly unrelated sectors, like medicine, law, even religion. Think of the framed degrees on the walls of the doctor’s office, opaque legal jargon, or masses in Latin, and you start to understand how the legacy Wall Street firms became so big. In all of these areas, the “experts” enhance their indispensability by withholding knowledge from their customers and creating an imbalance of power. →***That’s when we uncovered the biggest tension: Our Driven audience – so independent, confident and engaged in every aspect of their lives, seemed oddly powerless when it came to managing their investments. They handed over their funds to an advisor unquestioningly, even when they lost money.***

## Creative Execution

We couldn't directly attack our competitors – it would be seen as blaming our prospects for their decisions. And we couldn't claim better results – that's prohibited by the regulators. So we had to instigate our prospects to challenge the status quo. We thought of this as similar to helping someone get out of a bad relationship and there are three main components.

**"Sowing doubt":** By raising issues the rest of the industry actively works to avoid, we provoked the audience to question their current broker relationship in "Role Reversal" TV execution. The father-and-son conversation challenged affluent investors to re-think if they were really "owning" their hard-earned wealth.

**"It's not me, it's you":** Having raised doubts, we then equipped investors with the tools they needed to take back control. On our site and rich tablet ads, we created a checklist of questions that investors could use to re-evaluate their broker relationships. They also got to see how Schwab Financial Consultants would have answered those questions as a benchmark.

**"You can do better":** We also introduced our "Accountability Guarantee" promise to prove that we put money where our mouth is. A first in the financial category. We also created hyper-local videos and print ads of Schwab financial consultants speaking about their reasons for being at Schwab, thus connecting with prospects on shared values.

## Business Results

**Business growth:** The campaign was extremely well received and contributed to a double-digit growth rate in affluent New-To-Firm HHs between September 2014 and September 2015. [Source: Schwab Internal Business Reporting]

### **Brand Improvement:**

**Brand consideration, favorability and Intent to Purchase:** Schwab observed dramatic improvement on major brand attributes, especially in the second quarter of 2015, as evidenced by Schwab's year-over-year result. Not only did the brand outperform the affluent category average on unaided awareness and consideration, its favorability and purchase intent continued to grow during a time when the affluent category average overall was either declining or experiencing zero growth. [Source: Schwab Brand Tracking Report, June/2015]

**Perceived level of competence in wealth management service category:** In the wealth management category, metrics such as "Offers objective advice," "Has knowledgeable financial consultants," and "Provides the expertise I seek" are key indicators to assess the level of brand affinity in the minds of affluent investors. Schwab has observed major growth on the above-mentioned measures since the campaign launch. The 2015 Q2 data shows that we outperformed the affluent category average on all three measures. [Source: Schwab Brand Tracking Report, June/2015]