



Let me introduce you to a portfolio of Waghorne's – I'm the nice looking one in the middle.. The photo is black and white and it was taken anyway when nearly all cars were black - so in fact it doesn't make much difference.

This was in the time when the sun always shone, a busy day was a day full of play, and most things you wanted were freely given with love and care – and Christmas was a time when you were always given, by Santa, a selection box.



Anyone remember how special that selection box was? – not just one bar of chocolate, but several bars, several different bars and after all the presents were opened you were allowed to eat several of the different chocolate goodies one after another and all before your Christmas lunch.

My favourite selection box was from Mars and at its heart was the favourite outside of the Turkish Delight bar – the Mars Bar.



Now is it me or is it the fact that I'm a bit older and bigger since the photograph was taken but I'm not sure that Mars bars were bigger than they are now.

I also remember how the local sweetshop used to keep their Mars bars in peak condition in the summer months by keeping them in the fridge.



I was confronted with the phenomenon years later in 1985 when on a Henley Management College course we were asked to look at Mars and decide, as an exercise in brand extension, which of the following we would choose and devise a marketing plan for it. We chose, I recall, a Mars drink which we named “choclick”. Today Mars have almost launched all of these products.



They now have, through brand extension, a portfolio of Mars brands.

Developing a portfolio of products is one thing, incentivising and motivating salespeople to sell the portfolio with the same hunger that I had as I munched through the full Mars range in my Christmas selection box is another, let alone ensure that our customers also have a real hunger to consume the goodies in our selection box, our portfolio of products. That is another matter.



No amount of bonus, spot prizes or incentives will really motivate your sales teams on a sustained basis to sell a portfolio of products unless you get the basics right.

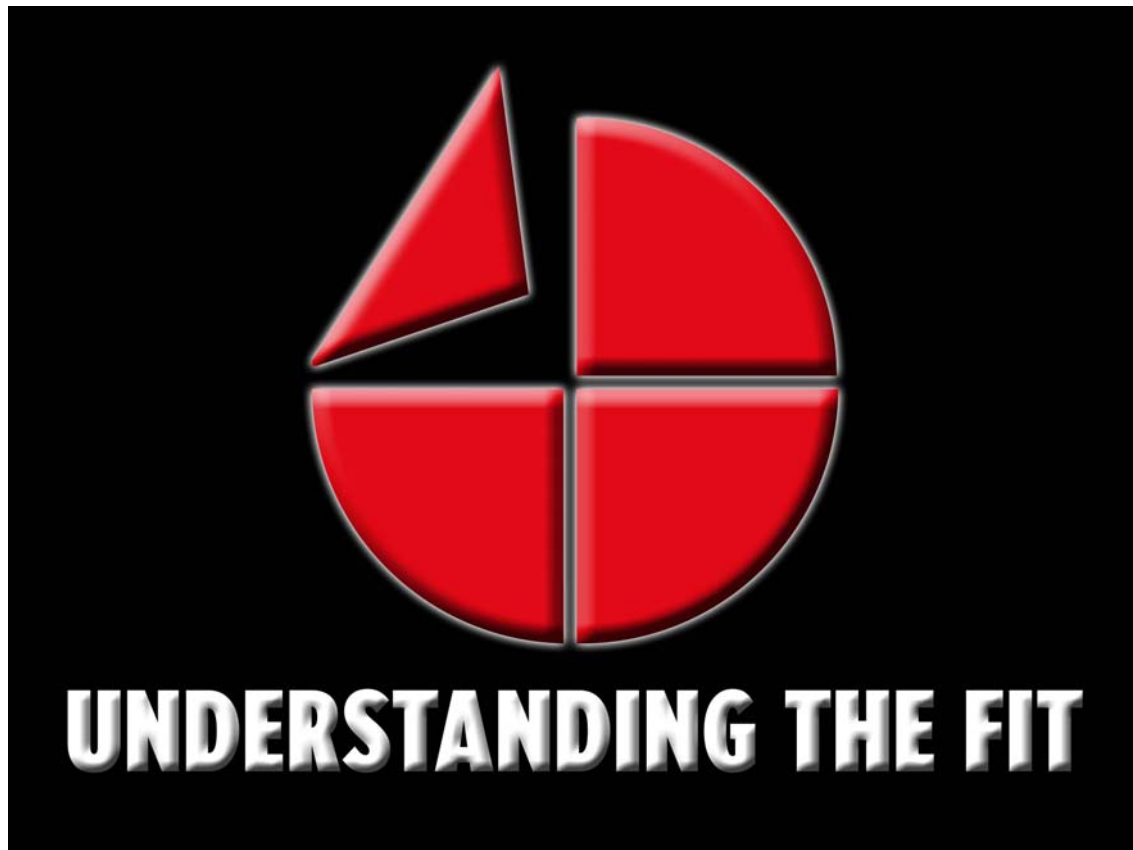
So that's what I want to briefly cover first.

Mars launched their Ice Cream bar by observing two things, firstly that sales of ordinary Mars bars plummeted in hot weather and secondly that sales were a good deal healthier in those outlets that placed the Mars bars in their fridge.

Mars then didn't try and anticipate the market, they didn't try and shape the market or manage it, they didn't pursue the market from a position somewhat behind, they simply matched the market.

MATCH THE MARKET

By matching the market their product made sense. As a result of that, their sales force knew it met a need and understood the fit.



Our industry has too many examples of sales teams who are drilled and encouraged over time to think of one product only and then to be given other products to sell that are often spin off products that satisfy generally only one need, that of the publishers desire to extract or protect revenues, and hence no real customer need is met. As a result it becomes an irksome task for the sales person to do.

I've even come across examples in which the existence of the extra products is hidden in both an assumptive sell and even worse in the invoice itself.



READY FIRE AIM

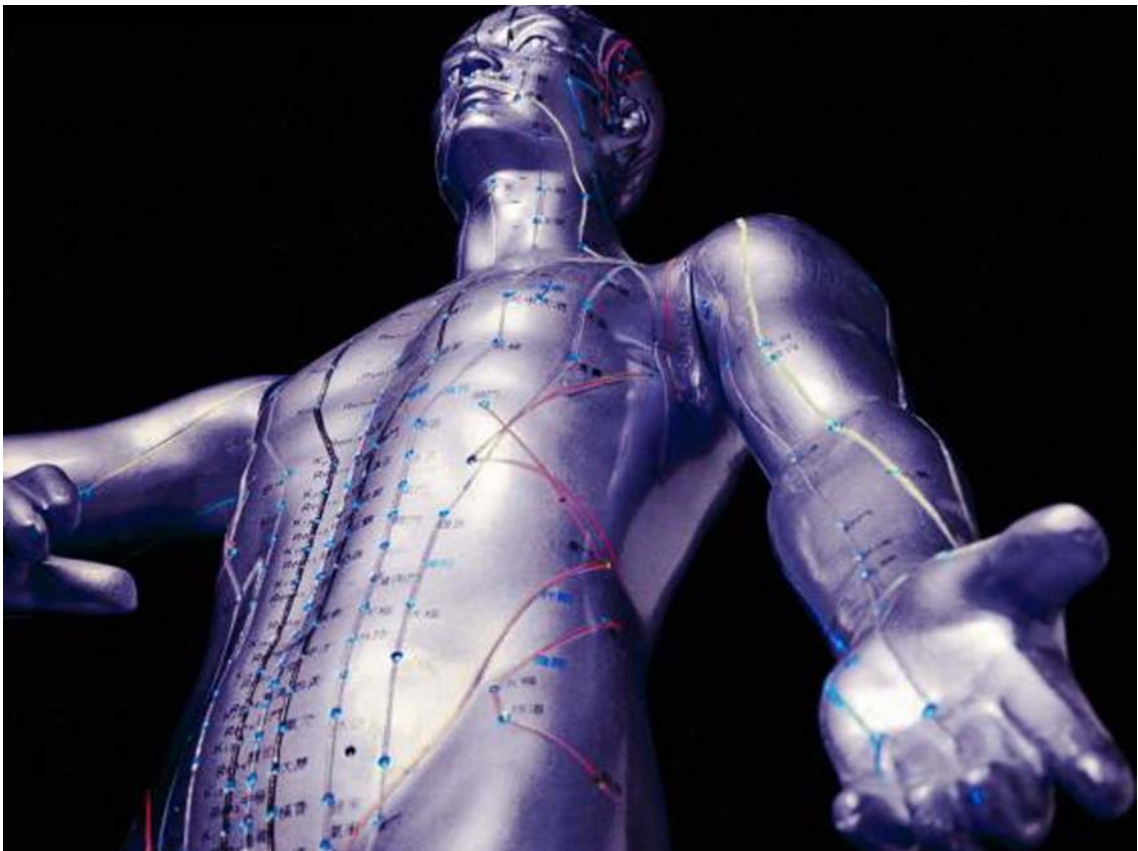
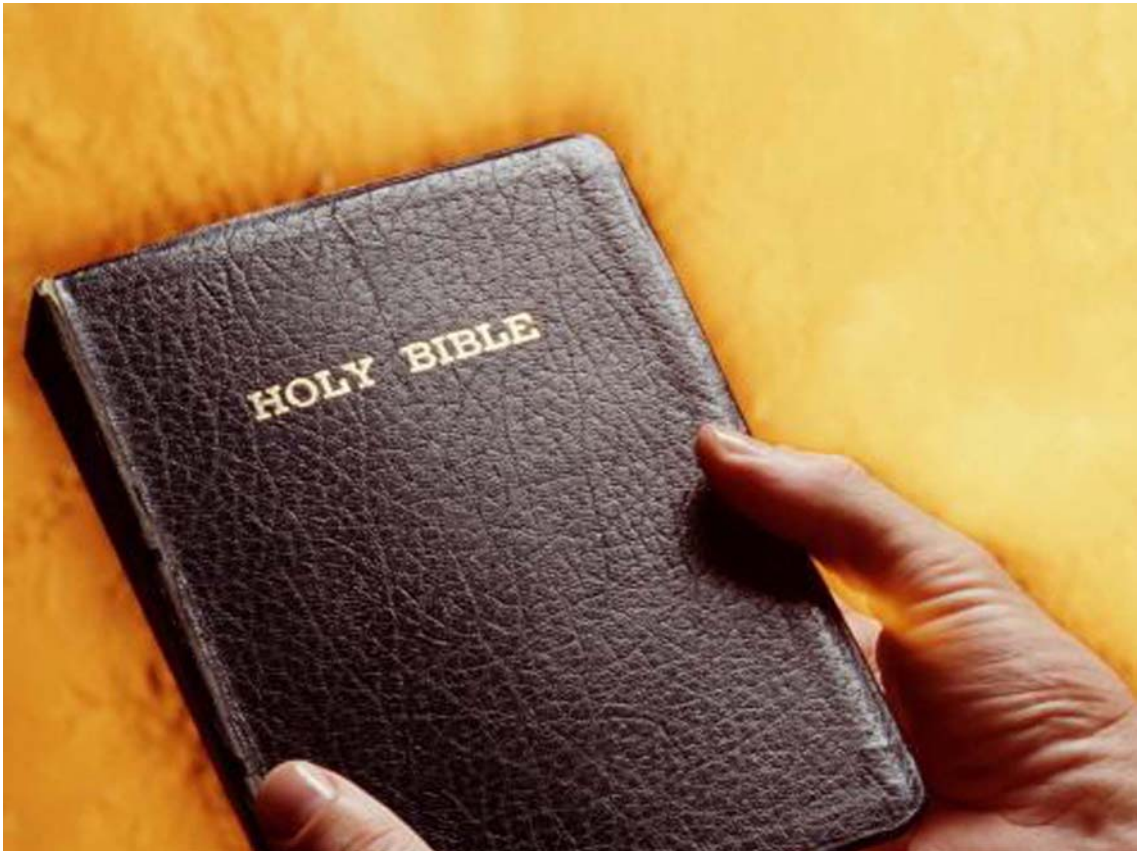
Equally often additional products are launched that are not completely thought through and are shaped and changed after launch to make them fit into the portfolio a little easier.



A key element in monitoring sales people is sales snobbery. They sometimes perceive that working on one product is a more important, senior role than working on another. This is already based on revenue garnering activities and is partly historical.

**EVERYONE AND EVERY
PRODUCT HAS A
PART TO PLAY**

At induction, and throughout, your sales people need to know that there is not one product that is actually more important than the rest. We've read the bible to them.



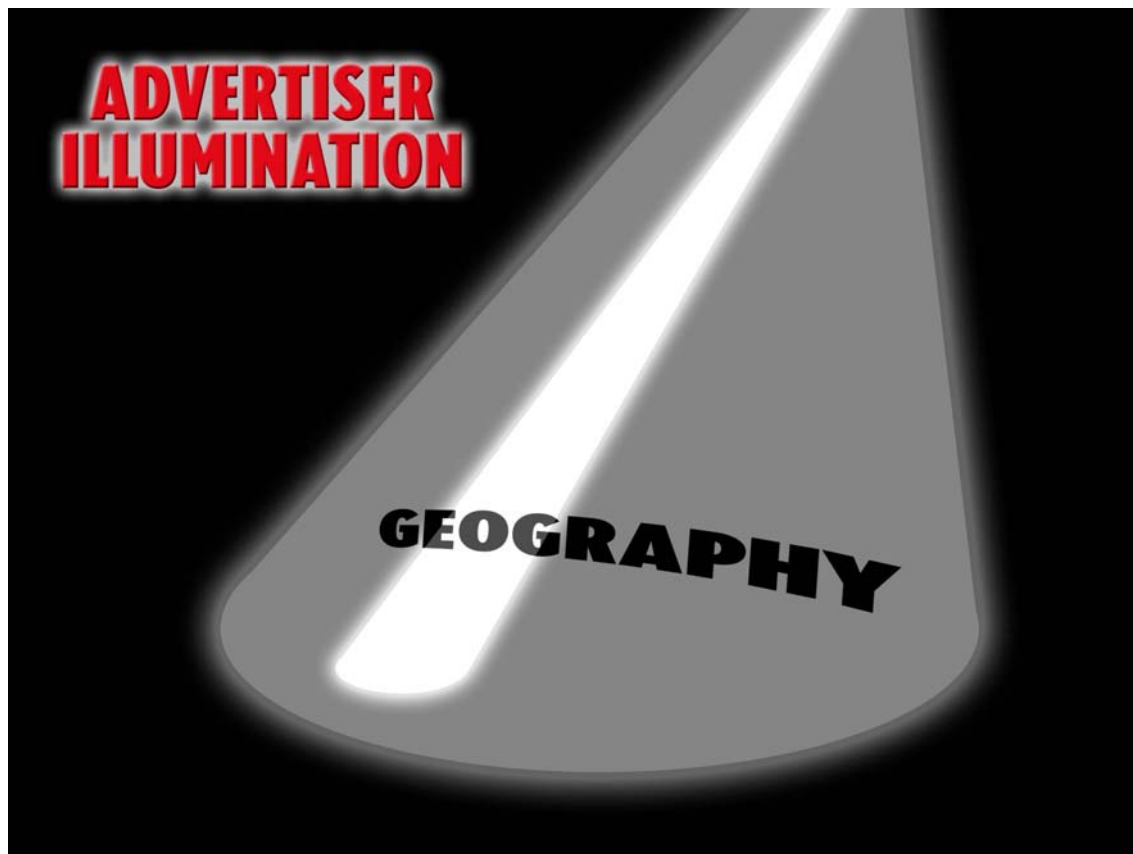
The functioning body of your organisation and its portfolio will take more if there is a clear understanding and appreciation of how all the products inter-relate to each other and depend on each other.

To help sales people understand this I liken it to an advertiser illuminating, or switching on, their market. Some products give a wide area of illumination, whilst others can give a sharper more focused effect.





The point being is that the sales person can see immediately the benefits of the two products and how they relate to each other. They can visually see how they work, both the broader beams and the more acute laser like approach.



The area of illumination can be of course a number of things. It can be geography showing area coverage say with another product focusing more acutely on a town or conurbation.



It can be socio-economic or demographic groups with the upweight or spotlight being on a particular sector.

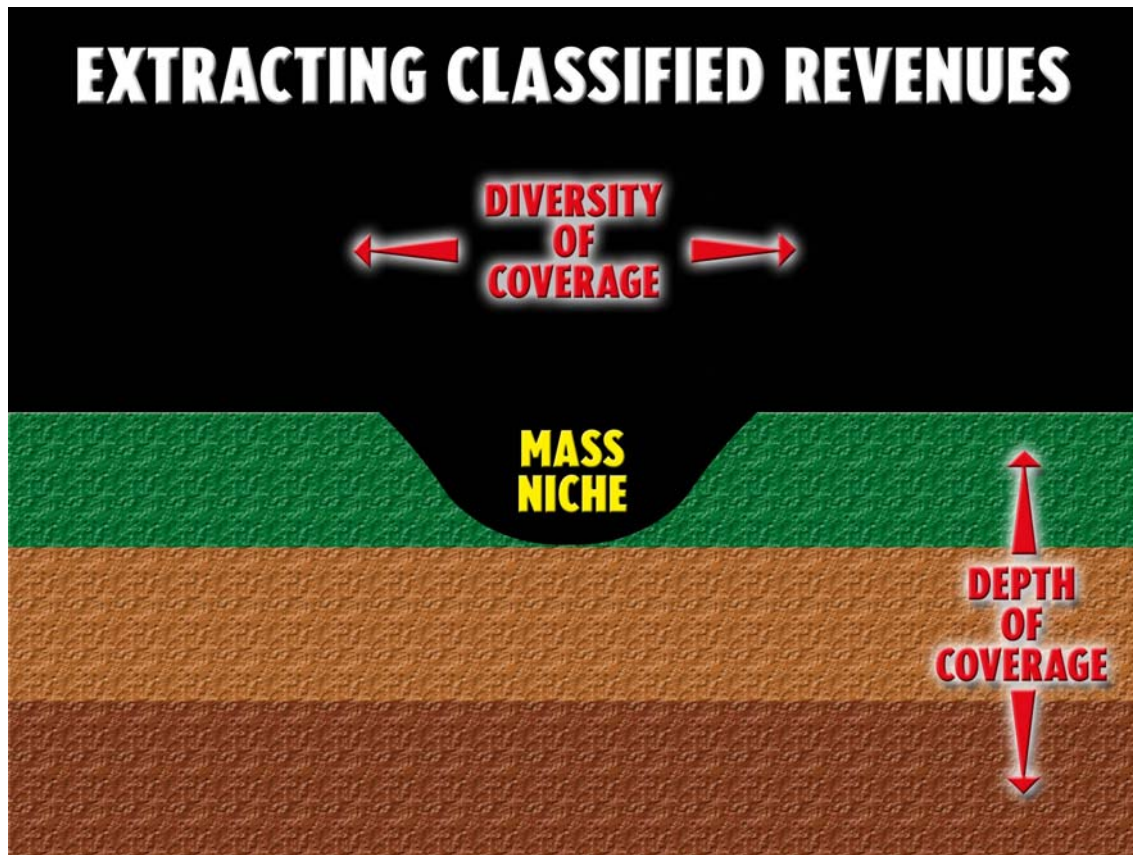
The length of time the lights are on is the same as the life of the publication or frequency. All sales people can relate to this – it's like just moving to music on a dance floor – I call it a disco but I'm not sure if that's the right term to use.

The point is that sales people can truly be motivated and incentivised in this way because they see the sense in it.

Now let's go beneath the surface.

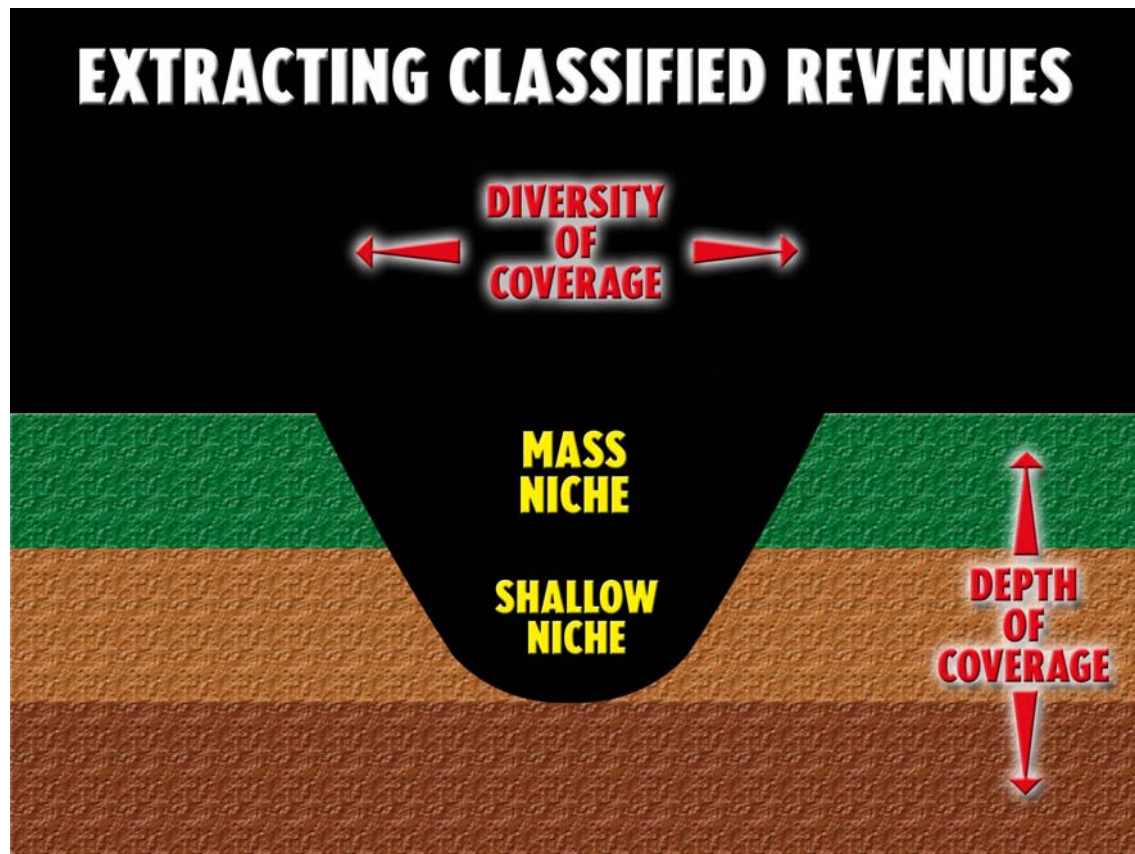
We need to be aware through our portfolio of how deeply we are extracting potential classified revenues. Spin off products, brand extensions or stand-alone products still relate to each other by adding value. They play a part in deep mining the total classified advertising potential by reaching those deeply hidden seams of revenue beneath the surface. I refer to this as deep mining the classified categories.

Most core products achieve a certain % market share but sales people need to understand the strengths and limitations of each product but how together the proposal is a strong one.



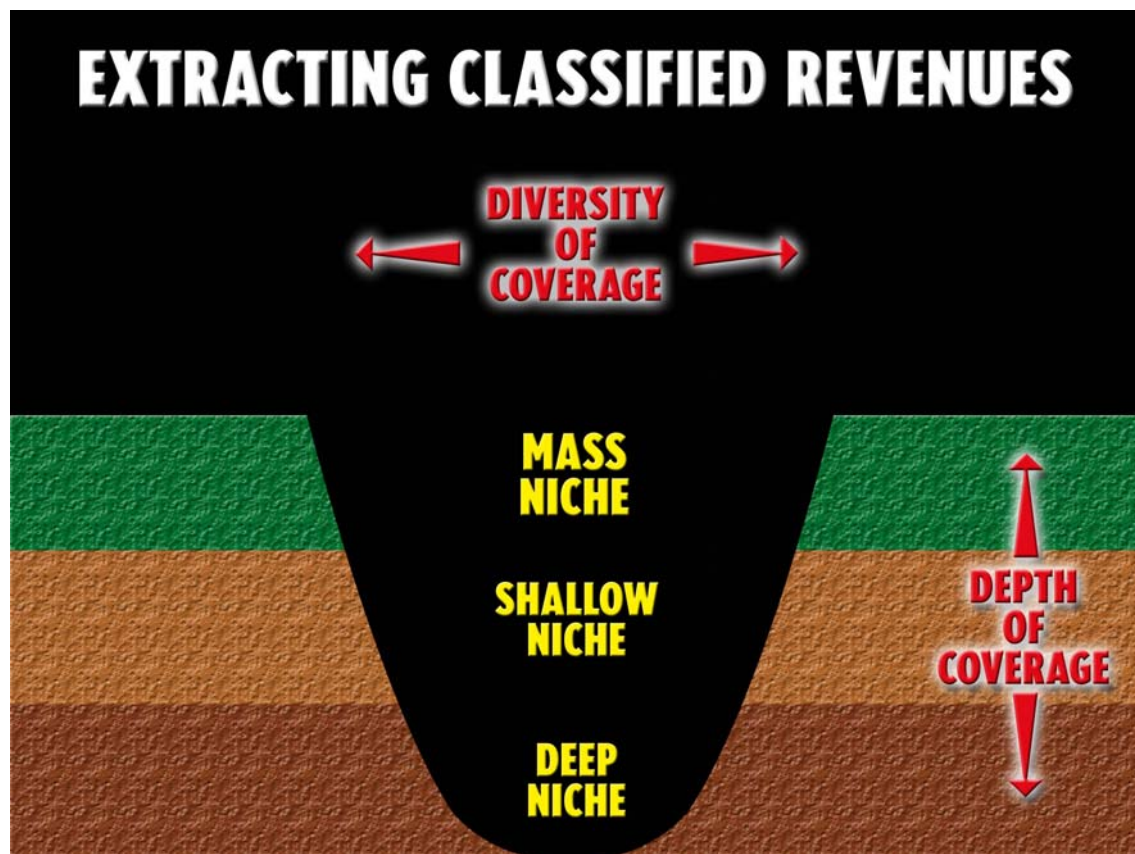
Usually with a core product such as a paid-for evening newspaper a wide diverse coverage is offered more that tremendous depth of coverage of any one particular market. It's like open cast mining.

To extract further classified revenues and market share and thereby offer advertisers more, you can develop spin off products and platforms I call shallow niche; that still relate strongly to the main brand, these are in my view more like brand extensions.



To reach the really hidden seams of classified revenues requires more effort, a lot more digging.

These products in the portfolio I refer to as deep niche.



These are more stand-alone publications than spin offs but still benefit, of course, from association with the main brand.

I have found sales people can be motivated by this explanation, they can see that there is a logical approach with the advertiser in mind in both illuminating the surface and from mining the company's point of view beneath the surface to secure a more meaningful market share.

As with all these other products besides packaging, which I have already referred to, we need to look at price. We shouldn't need assumptive selling or hidden extras – we should be selling across our portfolio as added value but motivate sales people by getting the package and price right.

PRICE & PACKAGING

GET THEM RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

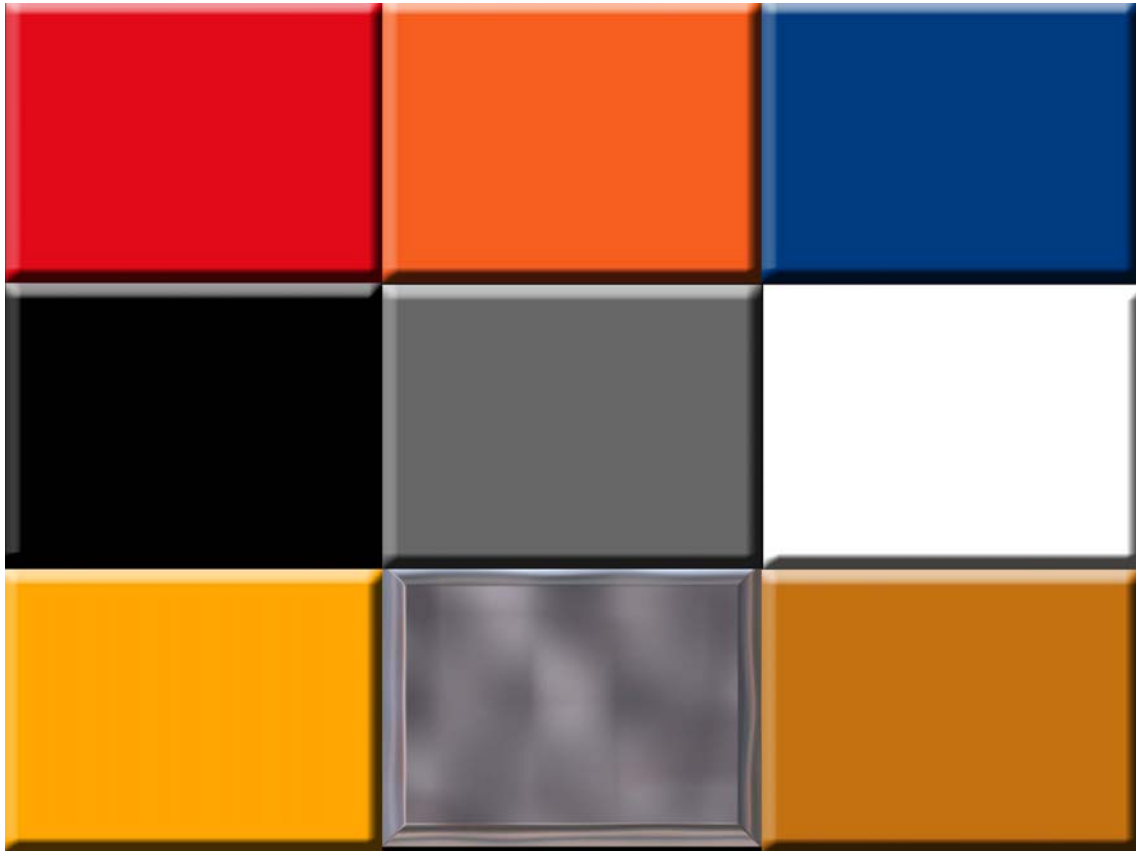
If you have three products run by three sales managers by the time you ask them for their lowest acceptable advertising rates you'll have a package across all three products that will be too expensive.



Formulate your pricing by having an external focus, pass it onto the customer as the package you want to buy. That way your sales people will not be deflated by what they know is a meaningless package that few will want to buy.

Be imaginable also in pricing, use units or vouchers that can be used across products as and when the advertiser wishes, one voucher for the product, three for that and so on. Even be prepared to price motors by car advertised rather than rate per centimetre.

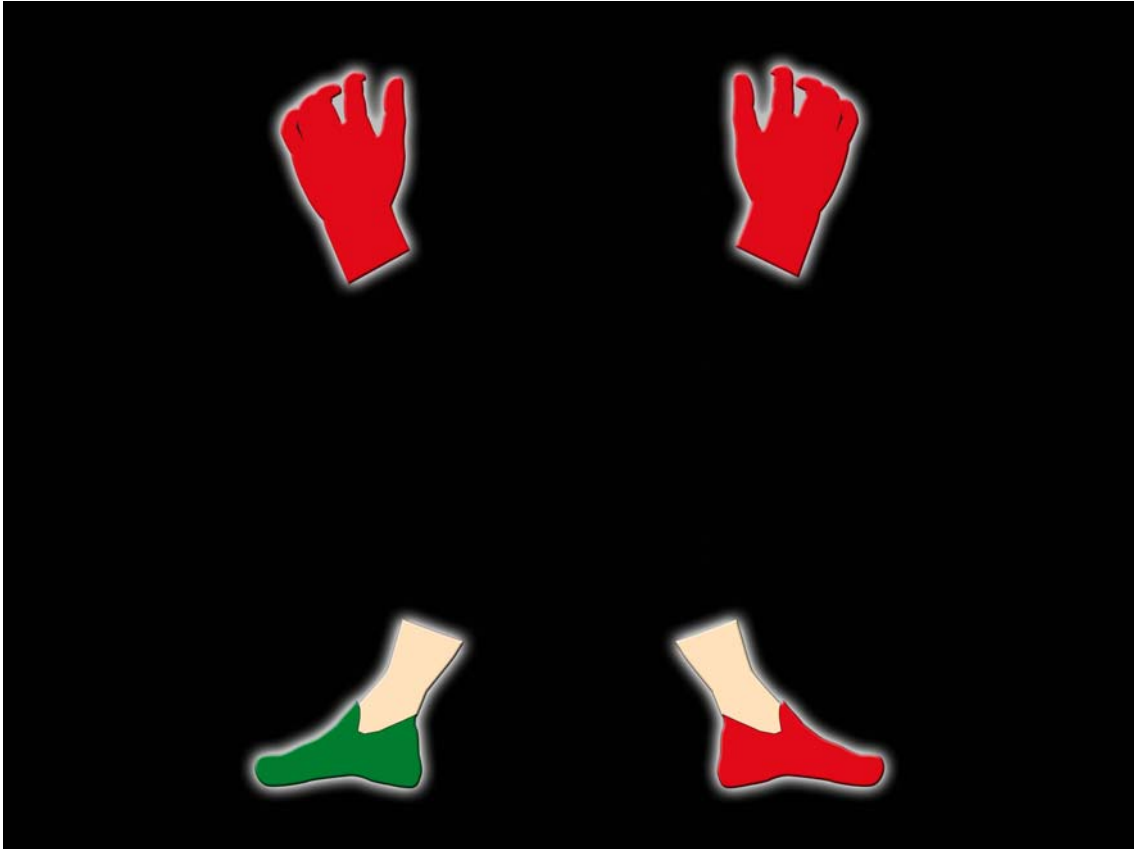
Give your sales people tools to sell the portfolio.



These colours refer to the laws of nature and the laws of cultural history.



We also have Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and event the Waghorne portfolio. The laws of gravity dictate that in rock climbing you only move one point of contact on the rock face at any one time, keeping three in contact. So without doubt three products, in my opinion, is the maximum number sales people can sell an advertisers can buy on a successful and sustained basis.



So how can we keep those sales people going then, even after we've done all this. Here's a few ideas:

Incentives are easier to do and think of and we've all used them in one shape or form so I'm not going to bore you with my ideas on them.

Suffice to say if you have the right approach to developing your portfolio with your sales force and they comprehend it more fully then the various incentive schemes that you devise will work.



You can use your titles just like a target board - a hit in the bullseye is more points than a hit in the outer ring - you can then fix the points as you wish as a guide to either financial reward or prizes.

You can use % of hit qualifies towards a super bonus on top of the normal bonus available.

Equally, using the illumination theme you can build up an incentive scheme based round the number of main beams to spotlights or lasers.

In summary:

1. Make sure sales people understand the needs the products satisfy.
2. Match the market.
3. Price with an external focus not an internal one and package.
4. Use real added value not hidden assumptions and itemise properly on invoices.

5. Remove sales snobbery.
6. Use the advertisers illumination illustration.
7. Get beneath the surface in planning your portfolio development and use more niche, shallow niche and deep niche relationships.
8. Three products is the maximum number sales people can handle if they are selling them properly.
9. Use the three to fix awards and incentives using % qualifiers, points.
10. keep a flexible approach.