

*Ad Designers  
Shouldn't  
Assume That  
Ticket Buyers  
Will See  
Entire  
Campaign*

by HENRY RUDDLE

# Campaign Myopia

**T**he Vancouver Opera launched its 1996 season with a brilliant, exciting, attractive advertising campaign which emphasized the gut emotions underpinning all great operas. Any potential ticket buyers who saw (and remembered!) all six ads would have had little choice but to attend every show.

Unfortunately, any potential buyers who saw only the season overview ad (*top left, page 13*) may have been confused. The soap-opera-type activities highlighted – **lust, greed, seduction, deception, envy and death** – are disconnected from the season's offerings and not clearly related to one another. The ad's main problem is its stark visual contrast between the large words above and the details of the season below.

All of the other ads in the series did a better job of visually linking the show and its main characters with appropriate key words (*bottom left, page 13*).

For the ads' designers, it would have been easy to see the direct connection between the five show-specific ads and the season overview ad (probably designed last). Yet, for readers, without the benefit of seeing all six ads laid out on the table before them, the overview ad failed to pack much of a punch. In the revised version (*top right, page 13*), the elements have been integrated in a manner more consistent with the design features of the other five ads, making it a more appropriate prelude to the rest of the campaign. ■

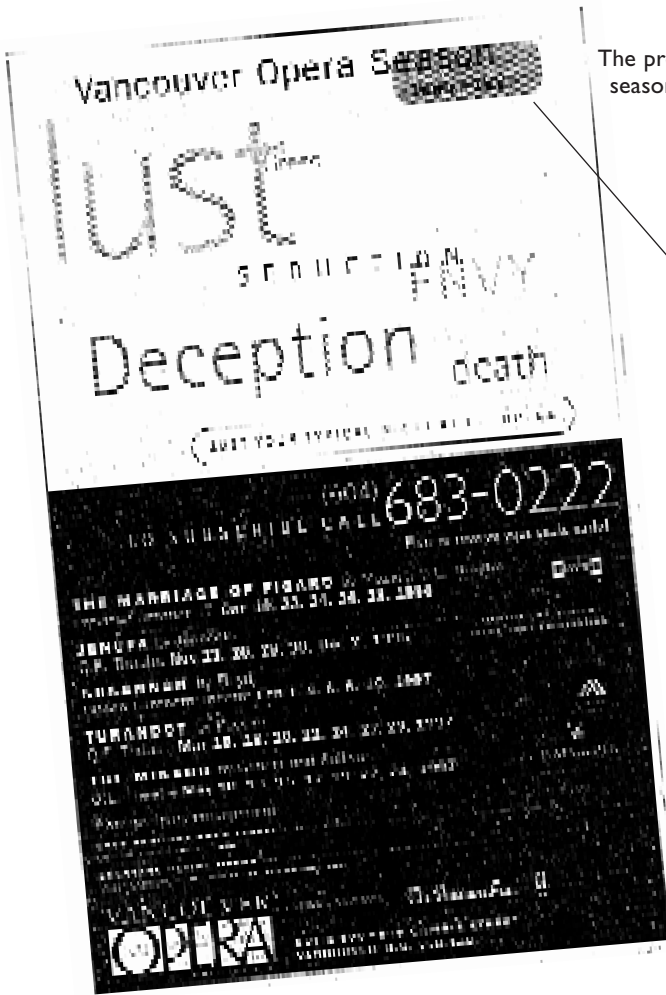
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➤ Increasing earned income	➤ Price sensitivity	➤ Change admission pricing	➤ Increased admissions
➤ Increasing donor revenue	➤ Importance of donor benefits	➤ Change benefits structure	➤ Increased donations
➤ Enhancing your image	➤ Preferences for your image	➤ Change presentation of offerings	➤ Increased audience satisfaction
➤ Increasing diversity	➤ Differences between segments	➤ Change strategies for reaching diverse audiences	➤ Increased audience diversity

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The problematic season summary ad.

The vertical layout used in the ads for each show (below left) establishes a useful two-column format, while also providing visual tension by contrasting with the horizontal round-cornered box and black foundation anchor. The format works well for the all-season ad as well, even without a dominant graphic (a part played here by the provocative words).

The "Vancouver Opera Season 1996-1997" heading is not necessary (and dulls the impact of the large words).

The key headline needed visual relevance.

Below, two of the elegant performance-specific ads in the series.

The phone number was hard to find. By placing it in the black anchoring strip at the bottom, it becomes more prominent.

The sponsors were getting lost in the black background, squeezed between the show dates and the ad border.

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