



XA04C1366

Alain de Tonnac presents:

## **Framatome's 1997 Advertisement Campaign**

As many other companies involved in the nuclear business, Framatome was initially concentrating on corporate advertisements in business newspapers and magazines.

### **The reasons for a change**

The last corporate ad campaign (1994) was promoting the fabrication capabilities of the company and its subsidiaries, in all of its sectors of activities, namely nuclear power, mechanical engineering, and connectors, while emphasizing the international dimension of the Group. This gave shape to the "grid"-type ad, that did not allow enough space for powerful headlines and long messages.

For many target groups however, the theme of corporate capability is not appropriate and not enough appealing. On the other hand, the company was (and still is) in a turmoil of a possible drastic change in its shareholding composition. Then, communicating on the different sectors could be considered inappropriate, if not even a tentative to interfere in the negociation underway between the shareholders.

A third reason was that, with nearly two thirds of its electricity generated by relatively young nuclear power plants, France is not in a hurry to build new units. There is still a large domain that remains practically free: Europe at large. But the deciders for such possible decisions are beyond the French borders, I mean in the European Institutions.

### **The new campaign**

A first goal was to concentrate on our traditional nuclear core business, while selecting the protection of the environment at large, and particularly the greenhouse effect, one of the most sensible issues of the moment. The 1997 campaign was shaped around the need to motivate European deciders, while maintaining a domestic consensus towards nuclear power for the future resumption of constructions.

### **The brief**

The brief elaborated for Ad agencies was roughly threefold:

- elaborate simple messages, unquestionable, and explained with serenity;
- put emphasis on the benefits of nuclear power for the environment;
- establish a balanced comparison between nuclear and fossil fuels;

### **The advertisement panels**

The initial version submitted by our agency DevarrieuxVillaret consisted in eight advertisements. Four were retained; another one dealt with the wastes, showing monkeys peacefully playing on a tree in the savanna, without being disturbed by the wastes leaved

there by the Oklo fossil reactors. The aim was to avoid to be accused of willing to hide the waste problem. The two last ones were on harmless health effects of nuclear reactors.

The tone is not arrogant, but confidential, concluding each message by "Frankly, did you know that?"

### **The pre-tests**

A pre-test was conducted with about 100 people, half of whom from the energy sector, and politicians, mainly members of the French and European Parliaments, the other half from the general public. Being accustomed to a usually discrete, if not "ashamed" nuclear communication, people were generally surprised by such an optimistic tone about nuclear power, but agreed, on average. It was based upon the reactions that the most "catastrophist" messages were eliminated, namely the themes on the harmless consequences of nuclear power on human health. The ad on nuclear waste was judged not legitimate for Framatome, and susceptible to displease our colleagues specializing in that activity !

### **The campaign**

The campaign lasted one month (spread over June-July '97), and the three selected ads appeared successively in the form of a colour double page. Beyond nuclear magazines, the media plan included French daily newspapers : le Figaro, le Monde, les Echos, Libération, and weekly magazines: le Point, le Nouvel Observateur, l'Express, etc. All of them are intended for middle to high social class readers. In addition, some advertisements were inserted in The European Voice, a weekly publication reaching Brussels Commission and European parliament members.

### **Results from the post-tests**

As an average, the campaign was perceived as dynamic (69%), and original (61%). But credibility and conviction were poor (resp 33%, 26%), probably because it was coincident with La Hague being on the carpet. On the other hand, Framatome was considered legitimate to communicate in the field of nuclear vs environment. The messages were well understood. Generally speaking, the executive population was more receptive than the general public.

### **Conclusion**

The merits of the Framatome campaign was to exclusively address the protection of the environment on a soft tone. But no triumphalism! the results show that there is a long way before having convinced the public of the environmental benefits of nuclear power. In view of Kyoto, we decided to go further with the campaign.