



**INTO THE FAST LANE:**  
*PROGRESS ON*  
**FRONT FOOT**

# Front Foot:

## putting advertising where it should be

### Front Foot and the Government's advertising review

Front Foot was set up by the Advertising Association at the end of 2009 because the advertising industry was in the wrong place.

It's just a year later. The Cabinet Office calls for urgent and immediate evidence on Government public information campaigns. Working with the Advertising Association, Front Foot took the opportunity to demonstrate to the Coalition the major social and economic contribution advertising makes to the country. 'UK society,' the Association's submission explained, 'has a huge stake in ensuring that government is properly equipped to communicate and advertise in a cost-effective manner.'

The Government's December 2010 review stemmed from the need not simply to cut costs, but from the realisation that the coalition and other stakeholders needed to think anew about the delivery of communications. And to think together.

In the space of a few weeks over Christmas, Front Foot contributed to a two-level consultation process with industry, helped accumulate and collate the relevant data, and helped draft the formal industry response in the Association's *Review of Government direct communications and the role of the COI*. The argument was that properly harnessed advertising and communications offers government a highly efficient and cost-effective tool for policy implementation. The response also rebutted the proposal for a US Ad Council style model as not fit for purpose in a modern, UK government context.

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*“The work on the Government’s communications review showcases how RA leads the agenda on advertising, working together on the big issues and demanding the attention of the politicians making the decisions that affect our industry.”*

Amanda Sourry, Chairman, Unilever UK & Ireland

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# Front Foot - the back story

## **The industry's opportunity**

The crash of 2008 knocked British business sideways. The ad industry was no exception, not least because – at the time - it was still coming to terms with the game-changing digital age. Together with a barrage of regulation from Whitehall and Brussels, largely brought about by single issue pressure groups and NGOs. Advertising to children, HFSS and the invasion of privacy were in their sights, for they blamed the medium for society's more deep-rooted problems. Partly as a consequence, the confidence of the general public in advertising was in long-term decline. In short, advertising was in the wrong place.

If that was the bad news, actually it wasn't all bad. The industry itself knew that advertising as a medium simply reflects society's changing values. It's a bellwether, not an instigator. It knew, too, that in a democratic society, advertisers should be perfectly free to promote – responsibly - legally available services and goods. It also realised that the digital age was much less a threat than an opportunity.

*'The fact is that advertising is used as a scapegoat for many of society's ills.'*

Tess Alps, Chief Executive, Thinkbox

**Front Foot: an industry-wide coalition**

So the Front Foot idea was to focus the confidence and convictions of the industry to put advertising back where we knew it should be.

Specifically, we aimed to:

- Regain public trust in advertising
- Strengthen the freedom of UK business to advertise responsibly.

Front Foot was to be led by an industry-wide coalition of brand owners, advertising agencies and media owners. (By 'advertising,' we meant all forms of commercial communications ranging from TV and film to sales promotion, sponsorship, DM and of course the web). And through Front Foot, the aim was to convince policy-makers, opinion-formers and - through them - society, that advertising is beneficial to society in general and the economy in particular. That advertising matters.

The infographic features the Advertising Association logo and the text 'promoting and protecting the role, rights and responsibilities of Advertising'. It is titled 'Front Foot Success Factors' and contains a central quote: 'Front Foot is an AA initiative to regain public trust in advertising and strengthen the freedom of UK business to advertise responsibly. Supported by an industry-wide coalition of advertisers, agencies and media owners, it will restore confidence in commercial communications by showcasing their cultural, social and economic value.'

<p><b>Front Foot</b> aims to convince policy-makers, opinion formers and through them society more generally that advertising is beneficial to people and the economy.</p> <p><b>Success means:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measurable increase in positive media coverage of the role of advertising in society and in wealth creation</li> <li>2. Shift in stance of key identified opinion formers towards benefit of advertising within 2 years commencing 2010</li> <li>3. Measurable recovery in public trust and approval ratings of 'advertising' - the turnaround commencing within the next two years.</li> </ol>	<p><b>CREDOS</b> is Front Foot's think-tank, overseen by an Advisory Board to assure the quality, objectivity and transparency of its work. Its mission is to understand the role, mechanisms and value of advertising in UK society &amp; the economy and to become the industry's independent authoritative voice.</p> <p><b>Success means:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Measurable recognition within two years, amongst commentators, policy-makers and the industry, as a trustworthy source of analysis and new understanding about advertising</li> <li>2. Design, testing and introduction of a framework of metrics - agreed with the FF Board to monitor the standing of advertising and communications in society generally and with key opinion forming groups</li> <li>3. A developing evidence base, thought-leading analysis, research and opinion pieces sufficient for the AA to assume a proactive leadership position of the agenda with key stakeholders</li> </ol>	<p><b>The AA</b> is the catalyst, and executive arm of FF. It will house CREDOS and deliver the communications programme.</p> <p><b>Success means:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building the FF community as a broad and balanced coalition of industry by December 2010</li> <li>2. A further £1m funding beyond the £750K so far raised by December 2010</li> <li>3. New governance model introduced June 2010 - agile executive decision-making WHILST taking the expanding group forward to address the main industry issues identified.</li> </ol>
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# What has Front Foot achieved?

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*‘Advertising plays a critical role in the creative economy, as a force for good. The Front Foot initiative provides a timely forum for its contribution to be voiced, understood and recognised.’*

Cilla Snowball, Chairman, AMV

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### **Rapid success**

Front Foot was launched at the end of 2009. Within months it had attracted elite support. Advertisers from British Airways to AVIVA, agencies from Mindshare to VCCP and an assortment of media channels. And that's not to mention the vital support of influential bodies like the IPA, ISBA and the COI.

### **Capitalising on talent**

This put a great deal of talent at Front Foot's disposal. Working with some of the best brains in marcoms, Front Foot's outline plan was turned into a clear series of objectives and KPIs. So for Front Foot, success means:

- A measurable increase in positive media coverage of the role of advertising in society and in wealth creation
- A shift in the views of key identified opinion-formers towards the benefit of advertising within two years
- A measurable recovery in public trust and approval ratings of 'advertising' - the turnaround commencing within the next two years.

### **£1million raised**

What's more, through the foresight and generosity of the founders, in the first year more than £1 million was raised. This is the industry war-chest to put advertising back on the Front Foot. At the same time something even more valuable was created: a leadership group for the industry as a whole.

### **Think-tank created**

Finally, as the vanguard of Front Foot, the founders set up an advertising think-tank called Credos. It's mission would be to understand the role, mechanisms and value of advertising in UK society and the economy. It was going to become the industry's impartial, authoritative voice, and it would provide the most robust and reliable evidence possible for the industry to rebut its critics. It would also be independent, with its own governing board.

This board is now chaired by James Best, with Will Hutton, Rory Sutherland, Mandy Pooler, Andrew Walmsley, Chris Mundy, Fiona Wood and Professor Nick Chater as board members.

# Credos

## Clear deliverables from initial research

Credos has now launched a major programme of research to better understand advertising in all its forms.

The first set of deliverables explored the subtleties of people's views on advertising. They showed where the medium is seen to be helpful and positive. And where it is not. Diminishing confidence seems to be a consequence less of advertising in general than of work aimed at groups like children. The research also identified a range of other issues of concern that impact on the reputation of advertising. For instance, advertisements themselves are trusted more than the industry that creates them; and the chief messages likely to improve its image are the social and economic benefits the medium confers. Not least because they're far from widely appreciated.

To build on this learning, in December Credos developed a Benchmark Trust Gauge. This will monitor perceptions of stakeholders, and provide a yardstick by which future successes of Front Foot can be measured. It's going to be buttressed by a Database of Favourability and Approval, using statistics going back almost two generations to 1961.

## Major projects for 2011

In the next few months Credos is:

- Exploring the nature of mistrust in advertising at the Credos Forum
- Collaborating with the Work Foundation on the value of advertising to the UK national economy, local economies, and the creative industries
- Researching the attitudes of parents and children to advertising
- Establishing a framework for the measurement of the Front Foot success factors, including a public opinion survey and interviews with MPs and opinion formers
- Working with the global marketing information provider WARC on a study of 100 years of advertising growth.

With the sponsorship of a Market Research Society advertising research award, a website launched, a blog started, plus Twitter and linked in feeds, Credos has made a good start on the job of delivering the promise of Front Foot. It's on the way to becoming the industry's independent and authoritative voice.

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*‘At a time when new forms of advertising may be targeting controversial products and audiences, it’s vital to understand what’s going on.’*

Dave King, Telegraph Group

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CREDOS



# Spreading the word

## Getting on the Front Foot

Having a robust understanding of the relationship between advertising and its audience is one thing. Disseminating that knowledge is quite another. So communications is an essential part of the Front Foot story.

This means that the Advertising Association is beginning to operate on a much broader communications front. A director of communications has been appointed, a PR agency hired, and a strategy devised. This stems from the key insight that advertising has more people ready to be friends than it supposed. They just don't know how. So the plan is to get noticed by the industry first, build a 'word of mouth' engine to do the communicating (including the website), and then move into the mainstream. That means hearing advertising's voice on the big issues of the day like the Coalition's concept of the Big Society, and Government communications.

The result's been a raft of trade and mainstream media coverage, much of which has been very high-profile. It includes pieces on the front page of the Financial Times, a major article in Campaign, and the appearance of Advertising Association Chief Executive Tim Lefroy on the lead item of Channel 4 News.

## New website

And now, with the Credos research pipeline flowing, we'll be redoubling our efforts on the communications front, with some big stories in development. We'll also be re-launching our website. It'll be crammed full of data, dynamic, and hugely user-friendly. Helping our friends speak up on advertising's behalf.

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*‘Once and for all we’re going to crack this paradox of the communications industry that fails to communicate itself.’*

Ian Barber, communications director, Advertising Association.

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## SOME OF OUR LEADERS



Promoting the value of agencies



# What next for Front Foot?

## New call for funds

Front Foot's now reached the end of its first phase. Its foundations are in place, its friends and supporters are in high places, and its work has properly begun.

Not ended. We won't reverse the slow decline in public trust in advertising, nor banish ignorance of - and prejudice about - the medium overnight. Front Foot and Credos are funded, but not financed forever.

That's why we are looking to raise another very substantial sum to add to the existing war chest. In all, £750,000. Of this, £50,000 apiece will come from advertisers and media channels, and £10,000 each from agencies. This will complete the two year proof-of-concept period, running from May 2010 to May 2012, and will support the establishment costs of Credos. Most, though, will be ploughed straight back into the research programme itself.

## Benefits of membership

The original supporters recognise the challenges identified by Front Foot, believe that endorsing it is in the interests of everyone in the advertising industry; and they have seized the opportunity to contribute to finding some solutions. They have found the resulting exchange and development of ideas a creative process that puts all those concerned on their mettle. In short, contributing to Front Foot provides an opportunity for both

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*'I think people really want to have a go at making a difference, and that's just what they are doing.'*

Matt Brittin, CEO Google UK

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individual and corporate development at the highest level in the marcoms industry. It's all about industry leadership. As Matt Brittin, CEO of Google UK, comments of Front Foot, 'I think people really want to have a go at making a difference, and that's just what they are doing.'

## Find out more

To hear more about Front Foot and how to support it, any of the current players will give you the inside track. The latest list is on the next page.

Or just call the Advertising Association's CEO, Tim Lefroy, on 020 7340 1100.



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# Front Foot Roll of Honour – March 2011

	<b>Company</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Main Contact</b>
1.	Ad Association	Tim Lefroy	Amanda Myers
2.	AMV BBDO		Cilla Snowball
3.	CREDOS		James Best / Karen Fraser
4.	AVIVA		Amanda Mackenzie
5.	BA	Drew Crawley	
6.	Barclays		Sara Bennison
7.	BBH	Nigel Bogle	Nick Kendall
8.	BMB		Andrew McGuinness
9.	BT	Gavin Patterson	Suzi Williams
10.	Carat	Tracy de Groose	
11.	COI		Wendy Proctor
12.	CBS Outdoor	Mike Moran	
13.	Clear Channel	Rob Atkinson	
14.	DDB		Stephen Woodford
15.	Diageo	Paul Walsh	Matt Barwell
16.	Engine / WCRS		Penny Herriman
17.	Future Foundation		Deborah Parkes / Melanie Howard
18.	IPM	Roy Jeans	
19.	Google	Matt Brittin	Dominic Allon / Mark Howe
20.	JCDecaux	Dave McEvoy	
21.	JWT	Toby Hoare	Guy Hayward / Joe Petyan
22.	Kantar	Eric Salama	Mandy Pooler
23.	M&C Saatchi	David Kershaw	
24.	McCain Foods	Nick Vermont	Helen Priestley
25.	Microsoft	Ashley Highfield	Nickie Smith / Tim Kimber
26.	Mindshare		Jed Glanvill / Dominic Proctor
27.	Ogilvy	Paul O'Donnell	
28.	Pepsico	Richard Evans	Ian Ellington
29.	Posterscope	Glen Wilson	
30.	Saatchi and Saatchi	Robert Senior	Michael Rebelo
31.	Santander	Keith Moor	Karen Brooks
32.	Telegraph	Murdoch MacLennan	Dave King
33.	VCCP		Adrian Coleman
34.	VivaKi		Derek Morris
35.	Vizeum	Grant Millar	
36.	Waitrose	Mark Price	Rupert Thomas
37.	WARC	Rufus Olins	
38.	Dare		Helen Calcraft
39.	*ITV		Fru Hazlitt
40.	*IPA		Hamish Pringle
41.	*ISBA		Mike Hughes
42.	*NPA / NS		David Newell

\* Front Foot supporters