

Lessons we can learn from Irish Ad Campaigns

[ADVERTISING](#) [EDINBURGH](#) [OPINION](#)

ALICE MCKINNEY - PLANNER/BUYER 07 MAY 2020

There are so many great Irish ads I remember from growing up in Dublin. Looking back, it's easy to see why they had an effect on me- they are all centred on Irish identity, capturing the essence of what it meant to be Irish at the time. I love a good emotional pull in an ad, and at the moment there are lots of them about here too, and they feel more sincere and authentic than ever. Maybe looking back at the Irish ads I love will draw some inspiration for how we can help to evoke the sense of the “new normal” when it comes.

1. Barry's Tea "Strangest" (2007)

I have to start with Barry's Tea. For years Barry's Tea ran character-driven TV campaigns centred on Irish people connecting through cups of gold blend. My favourite is the pair who have a "moment" over a cup of tea in their office. I remember making fun of this ad with my friends at school and mocking the toe-curling line: "Is this a date?!...I dunno, is it?". But that for me is what it's all about- you love to hate it, but you love it deep down.

2. Kerrygold, "The Sod" (2009)

Many brands have this quality of holding a mirror to society, and Kerrygold is a great example of this- representing the Irish diaspora. This ad shows a familiar character in the father-to-be who collects some soil from his native Ireland to take back to Germany for the birth of his son. Kerrygold even have a little note about it on their website: *The advert is a celebration of the real Ireland and all the things that Kerrygold stands for: family, generations, reverence for nature and the deep-rooted connection we have to the land.*

3. Brennans "Welcome Home" 2019

Bread holds serious stock in Ireland, and a lot of our advertising is for bread brands; a healthy rivalry between Pat the Baker and Brennans has been fought valiantly for many years. The last time I was home for Christmas there was an amazing OOH takeover at Dublin airport from Brennans- welcoming me home and urging me to have some toast when I get in the door. It must be commended, it was so striking, and it did make me feel warm and fuzzy inside (albeit very hungry).

Read more [here](#).

4. Denny "Surfers" (2005)

A number of unscripted Irish households were recorded for Denny campaigns during the 2000s- from first days of school to wedding days. This one has some lovely scenes from a group of surfers in the West of Ireland. Denny is a brand that puts families and friends at the heart of their messaging, showing

people enjoying the “taste of home” during the morning fry-up or their lunchtime staple: the humble ham sandwich.

5. HB Ice Cream “Dracula” (2005)

This is a classic for its depiction of the sarcastic and ever-playful Irish dad. HB is another brand who took everyday family moments (in this case, the daughter’s boyfriend comes over for dinner) and positioned its product as something that can provide some light relief. I remember this campaign fondly for poking fun at the generation gap, and let’s face it, it pioneered some sorely needed goth representation in Irish media.

6. An Post “For your World” (2019)

This campaign from our national postal service An Post is a celebration of Ireland’s best qualities: education, equality, openness, connectivity, and charity. I caught this on TV when I was visiting home and it made me feel so proud to witness how far we’ve come. That a national service would choose to celebrate diversity and inclusion in this way is not something I expected would happen a decade ago, so it’s definitely an emotional turn of the tide and a true reflection of the modern Irish spirit.

7. Harvey Norman

My final choice is the radio campaign from Harvey Norman that has been running seemingly forever. The ad format is unchanged since I can remember- a loud Australian man shouting at us about the latest sale at Harvey Norman. It features in many “most annoying ads ever” lists, but it’s a strategy that obviously works for them- I have to applaud their perseverance. It’s oddly comforting: that familiar voice is always there on any given ad break, the rallying cry of “MUST END SUNDAY!!!” I hope they never end. I’ve enjoyed remembering some of my favourite campaigns from Ireland. What they all have in common is providing some form of comfort, dependability, and above all: authenticity. It’s hard to achieve, but I always appreciated the effort, even when things were a little off the mark. I think the

lesson here is to try to connect with audiences, especially now. Evolving with the times we live in and adapting to cultural shifts. Brands can give comfort by telling us stories we relate to, showing us characters we know, and in their own way, reminding us that everything will be okay.

Read more about the end of the sale in the [Waterford Whisperer](#).

ADVERTISING EDINBURGH OPINION