Planning a photo shoot

   For this assignment, I have decided to plan a photo shoot specifically to advertise a single product through a number of different methods (i.e. billboard, posters, etc). To achieve this I will need to take a number of different photographs of said product and tailor them to suit the method.

   The product itself will be a brand new soft drink, and the photos will be used in a campaign to advertise it nationwide. To manage this effectively I first need to examine other examples of advertising drinks, to see what codes and conventions are used.

   To the right is an image used in the Coca Cola advert showing "the Coke side of life". Notably, the adverts themselves concentrate less on the taste of the drink and more on the overall image of the brand. However, this does make for a very memorable advert, as well as increasing the positive thoughts associated with Coca Cola.

   One possible problem with this advert is that, now, there are a lot of adverts in the same vein as this. This makes it easy to forget about the Coca Cola one in particular.

   This is also slightly different to the method I will be taking, in that it is less photography and more graphic design, but I think that it still shows some of the major things needed in a typical advert.
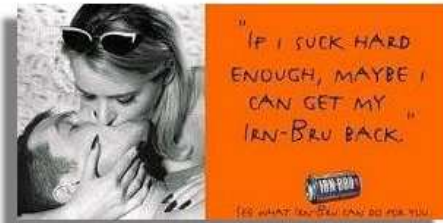
   Here is an advert used by Irn Bru. Whilst much more original and universally humorous, it is much less recognised. This could be due to Coca Cola having more money than Barr to advertise, or it could be that the adverts haven't been seen as often as the Coca Cola ones.

   Either way, despite the fact that the advert is much less memorable, it does serve in the same way many adverts do to inject a small amount of humour into a situation. This shows that a little humour can help for a successful advert.

   The photos that I plan to take will be primarily of, firstly, the packaging of the drink. Then I intend to produce some more photos of people generally shocked, amazed etc. whilst looking up at the sky. After mixing these pictures, I can create the effect of a huge can of drink descending from the sky. This theme could be potentially expanded to create a variety of different yet related adverts.

   To make this advert possible, I will need a variety of shots: firstly, a full shot of the drinks can to superimpose onto the second image, and some location shots to make it seem like it actually is happening. I could also possibly use some action shots to add a sense of movement to the advert.

   I will be using a digital camera for this shoot, because I feel that it would be quicker and more convenient to be able to upload the photos to a computer quickly and efficiently. Although this may mean the photos lose a slight amount of quality, they can easily be tweaked and changed in Photoshop.

After researching the daily rates for photography, I found that shoots can cost anywhere between £300 - £400, depending on the photographer (i.e. www.derekbrown.co.uk is one of the more expensive photographers). Considering the fact that I have next to no experience, I may have to aim considerably less. However, considering the prices for equipment, actors, props etc. for this project, I think that a fee of just under a quarter of this would be substantial.

There will be certain legal and ethical constraints: for instance, anyone in the photo shoot will need to sign a health and safety form despite the lack of occupational hazard, and they will need to be paid the national minimum wage. Also, I may need to research adverts to see if anything similar has already been done, to avoid copyright infringement.

As well as this, I will have to make sure the models know that the photo belongs to me and whoever uses it in their adverts. The subjects, if under 16, will have to get their parents to sign up for the shoot, and I need to be wary of where I take the photos (privacy issues).

Seeing as how I will be conducting the photo shoot outside (to get a photo including the sky from which the drink can descend), I will not need to hire out a photographic studio. This will keep my costs relatively low and also help with adding a good depth of field (hard to do in confined studio).

I will be working outside, so lighting shouldn't be an issue. However, if it is slightly over cast or darker than expected, I could use a light set up to give an ambience unavailable at the time. However, this will be more costly, and should be avoided.

It is unlikely that more props will be needed due to the fact that the shots will mainly consist of people running. Any props would only crowd the area and risk causing injury to running models.

The people used in shots will have to be chosen carefully. For instance, anyone with a more striking or eye-catching appearance (clothing, image, etc) may detract from the product being advertised. Depending on the colour of the label on the drinks can, the models will either be wearing similar colours to the can (for an eye catching colour scheme) or colours that are much more bland and uninteresting than the can (to draw attention to the product).

Once I have managed to organise everything I need, it's merely a matter of taking the photos and editing them later. I expect to take approximately 30 – 35 photos in total, and (after editing) to produce a contact sheet to present to the advertisers consisting of the more suitable ones.

I will need to make good use of Photoshop to mix the images together, by layering the can on top of the location shot. By adding a possible lens flare effect, I can also create an extra emphasis on the drinks can. This will ensure that the image is remembered foremost, and also add an artistic flair.

After the digital production of the image, the printing will be entirely up to the client; high quality paper for posters, larger durable paper for bill boards and bus stops, even an online advertisement is possible. I can save time and money by sending the image online directly to the client, and they can use it as they see fit.

Following these plans, I should be able to pull off the photo shoot in good time, to the client's standards, and make a profit.