

OGILVY

ON



ADVERTISING.

Ogilvy
on
Advertising

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on
Advertising
David Ogilvy



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'Let us march against Philip'

I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative'. I want you to find it so interesting that you *buy the product*. When Aeschines spoke, they said, 'How well he speaks!' But when Demosthenes spoke, they said, 'Let us march against Philip.'

In my *Confessions of an Advertising Man*, published in 1963, I told the story of how Ogilvy & Mather came into existence, and set forth the principles on which our early success had been based. What was then little more than a creative boutique in New York has since become one of the four biggest advertising agencies in the world, with 140 offices in 40 countries. Our principles seem to work.

But I am now so old that a French magazine lists me as the only survivor among a group of men who, they aver, contributed to the Industrial Revolution – alongside Adam Smith, Edison, Karl Marx, Rockefeller, Ford and Keynes. Does old age disqualify me from writing about advertising in today's world? Or could it be that perspective helps a man to separate the eternal verities of advertising from its passing fads?

When I set up shop on Madison Avenue in 1949, I assumed that advertising would undergo several major changes before I retired. So far, there has been only *one* change that can be called major: television has emerged as the most potent medium for selling most products.

Yes, there have been other changes and I shall describe them, but their significance has been exaggerated by pundits in search of trendy labels. For example, the concept of brand images, which I popularized in 1953, was not really new; Claude Hopkins had described it 20 years before. The so-called Creative Revolution, usually ascribed to Bill Bernbach and myself in the fifties, could equally well have been ascribed to N.W. Ayer and Young & Rubicam in the thirties.

Meanwhile, most of the advertising techniques which worked when I wrote *Confessions of an Advertising Man* still work today. Consumers still buy products whose advertising promises them value for money, beauty, nutrition, relief from suffering, social status and so on. All over the world.

In saying this, I run the risk of being denounced by the idiots who hold that any advertising technique which has been in use for more than two years is *ipso facto* obsolete. They exorcise slice-of-life commercials, demonstrations and talking heads, turning a blind eye to the fact that these techniques still make the cash register ring. If they have read Horace, they will say that I am *difficilis, querulus, luctator temporis acti*. So

'I run the risk of being denounced by the idiots who hold that any advertising technique which has been in use for more than two years is *ipso facto* obsolete.'

*faux, castigator, censorque miserum.*⁴ So what? There have always been noisy lunatics on the fringes of the advertising business. Their stock-in-trade includes ethnic humor, eccentric art direction, contempt for research, and their self-proclaimed genius. They are seldom found out, because they gravitate to the kind of clients who, bamboozled by their rhetoric, do not hold them responsible for sales results. Their campaigns find favor at cocktail parties in New York, San Francisco and London but are taken less seriously in Chicago. In the days when I specialized in posh campaigns for *The New York*, I was the hero of this coterie, but when I graduated to advertising in mass media and wrote a book which extolled the value of research, I became its devil. I comfort myself with the reflection that I have sold more merchandise than all of them put together.

'I hate rules'

I am sometimes attacked for imposing 'rules.' Nothing could be further from the truth. *I hate* rules. All I do is report on how consumers react to different stimuli. I may say to a copywriter, 'Research shows that commercials with celebrities are below average in persuading people to buy products. Are you *sure* you want to use a celebrity?' Call that a *rule*? Or I may say to an art director, 'Research suggests that if you set the copy in black type on a white background, more people will read it than if you set it in white type on a black background.' A *law*, perhaps, but scarcely a rule.

In 18th-century England, a family of obstetricians built a huge practice by delivering babies with a lower rate of infant and maternal mortality than their competitors. They had a secret – and guarded it jealously, until an inquisitive medical student climbed onto the roof of their delivering room, looked through the skylight and saw the forceps they had invented. The secret was out, to the benefit of all obstetricians and their patients. Today's obstetricians do not keep their discoveries secret, they publish them. I am grateful to my partners for allowing me to publish mine. But I should add that the occasional *opinion* expressed in this book do not necessarily reflect the collegial opinions of the agency which employs me.

This is not a book for readers who think they already know all there is to be known about advertising. It is for young hopefuls – and veterans who are still in search of ways to improve their batting average at the cash register.

I write only about aspects of advertising I know from my own experience. That is why this book contains nothing about media, cable television or advertising in Japan.

If you think it is a lousy book, you should have seen it before my partner Joel Raphaelson did his best to de-louse it. *Bless you, Joel.*

David Ogilvy

2

How to produce advertising that sells

Pretend you started work this morning in my agency, and that you have dropped by my office to ask for advice. I will start with some generalities about how to go about your work. In later chapters I will give you more specific advice on producing advertisements for magazines, newspapers, television and radio. I ask you to forgive me for oversimplifying some complicated subjects, and for the dogmatism of my style—the cognitivism of brevity. We are both in a hurry.

The first thing I have to say is that you may not realize the magnitude of difference between one advertisement and another. Says John Caples, the doyen of direct response copywriters:

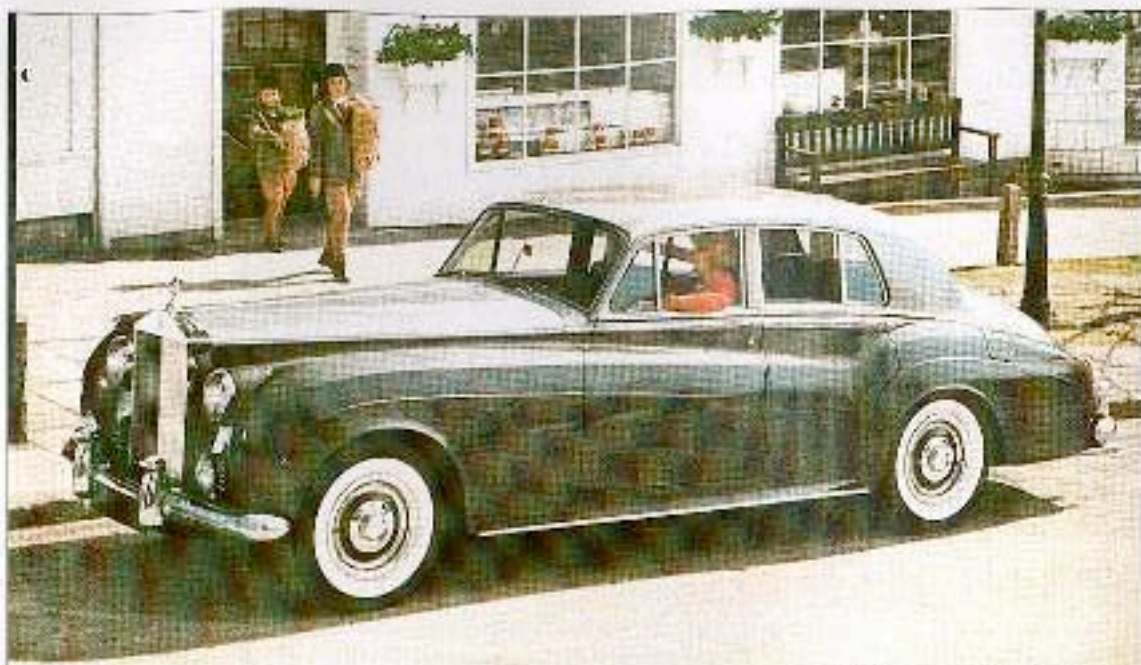
I have seen one advertisement actually sell one twice as much, and three times as much, and 19% times as much as another. But the advertisements occupied the same space. Both were run in the same publication. Both had photographic illustrations. Both had carefully written copy. The difference was that one used the right appeal and the other used the wrong appeal.³

The wrong advertising can actually *wipe* the sales of a product. I am told that George Hay Brown, at one time head of marketing research at Ford, inserted advertisements in every other copy of the *Reader's Digest*. At the end of the year, the people who had *not* been exposed to the advertising had bought more Fords than those who had.

In another survey it was found that consumption of a certain brand of beer was lower among people who remembered its advertising than those who did not. The brewer had spent millions of dollars on advertising which *was* sold his beer.

I sometimes wonder if there is a tacit conspiracy among clients, media and agencies to avoid putting advertising to such acid tests. Everyone involved has a vested interest in prolonging the myth that *all* advertising increases sales to some degree. It does not.

³*Direct Advertising Methods* by John Caples, Prentice-Hall, 1975.



The Rolls-Royce Phantom V—\$13,395

"At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock"

What makes Rolls-Royce the best car in the world? "There is really no magic about it—it is merely patient attention to detail," says an eminent Rolls-Royce engineer.

1. At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise comes from the electric clock. Reports the Technical Editor of *Time* magazine. Three mufflers dampen sound frequencies—acoustically.

2. Every Rolls-Royce engine is run for seven hours at full throttle before installation, and each car is test-driven for hundreds of miles over varying road surfaces.

3. The Rolls-Royce is designed as an over-engineered car. It is lighter in weight than the largest domestic cars.

4. The car has power steering, power brakes and automatic gear-shift. It is wire-cable in drive and to park. No clutch pedal required.

5. The finished car spends a week in the final workshop, being fine-tuned. Here it is subjected to 99 separate checks. For example, the engineers use a microscope to learn for axle whine.

6. The Rolls-Royce is guaranteed for

three years. With a new network of dealers and service centers from Coast to Coast, service is no problem.

7. The Rolls-Royce radiator has never changed, except that when Sir Henry Royce died in 1933 the monogram RR was changed from red to black.

8. The bodywork is given five coats of primer paint, and hand rubbed between each coat, before nine coats of finishing paint go on.

9. By moving a switch on the steering column, you can adjust the shock absorbers to suit road conditions.

10. A picnic table, veneered in French walnut, slides out from under the dash. Two more swing out behind the front seats.

11. You can get such optional extras as an Espresso coffee-making machine, a dictating machine, a hot, hot and cold water ice-making, an electric razor or a telephone.

12. There are three separate systems of power brakes, two hydraulic and one mechanical. Damage to one will not affect the others. The Rolls-Royce 60 is a superb car, and also a very clever car. It cruises smoothly at eighty-five. Top speed is in excess of 100 m.p.h.

13. The Bentley is made by Rolls-Royce. Except for the radiators, they are identical motor cars, manufactured by the same engineers in the same works. People who feel diffident about driving a Rolls-Royce can buy a Bentley.

Rolls-Royce Phantom V—\$13,395. The Rolls-Royce illustrated in this advertisement—F.O.B. principle, price of entry—costs \$13,395.

If you would like the rewarding experience of driving a Rolls-Royce or Bentley, write or telephone to one of the dealers listed on separate page. Rolls-Royce Ltd., 10 Park Lane, London, W.1, England. New York 20, N. Y. Circle 5-1144.

Suddenly DOVE makes soap old-fashioned!

Now you can toilet bar for enough to last this winter you bath.

DOVE is the most brilliant soap ever made. It's the only soap that doesn't dry your skin.

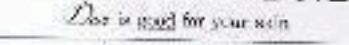
DOVE is the only soap that doesn't dry your skin.

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DOVE is the only soap that doesn't dry your skin.



Dove is good for your skin

Above I positioned Dove as a toilet bar for women with dry skin, and used a promise which had won in tests: 'Dove creams your skin while you bathe.'

resulting campaign helped to reverse a seven-year decline in Shell's share-of-market.

If you are too lazy to do this kind of homework, you may occasionally *luck* into a successful campaign, but you will run the risk of skulding about on what my brother Francis called 'the slippery surface of irrelevant brilliance.'

Your next chore is to find out what kind of advertising your competitors have been doing for similar products, and with what success. This will give you your bearings.

Now comes research among consumers. Find out how they think about your kind of product, what language they use when they discuss the subject, what attributes are important to them, and what promise would be most likely to make them buy your brand.

If you cannot afford the services of professionals to do this research, do it yourself. Informal conversations with half-a-dozen housewives can sometimes help a copywriter more than formal surveys in which he does not participate.

Positioning

Now consider how you want to 'position' your product. This curious verb is in great favor among marketing experts, but no two of them agree what it means. My own definition is 'what the product does, and who it is for.' I could have positioned Dove as a detergent bar for men with dirty hands, but chose instead to position it as a toilet bar for women with dry skin. This is still working 25 years later.

In Norway, the SAAB car had no measurable profile. We positioned it as a car for *winter*. Three years later it was voted the *best* car for Norwegian winters.

To advertise a car that looked like an orthopedic boot would have defeated me. But Bill Bernbach and his merry men positioned Volkswagen as a protest against the vulgarity of Detroit cars in those days, thereby making the Beetle a cult among those Americans who eschew conspicuous consumption.

Right Robert Townsend, the eccentric head of Avis, asked me to do his advertising.

When caught with another client, I found me to refuse. Doyle Dane Bernbach created one of the most powerful campaigns in the history of advertising. 'When you're only Number 2, you try harder. Or else.' This diabolical positioning made life miserable for Hertz, who was Number 1.

Opposite Doyle Dane Bernbach positioned Volkswagen as a protest against Detroit, thereby making the Beetle a cult among non-conformists. The copywriter was Julian Koenig, the art director Helmut Krone. Sales of the car went up to 500,000 cars a year.

When you're only No.2,
you try harder.
Or else.



When you're only No.2, you try harder. Or else.

Avis is only No.2
in rent a cars.
So why go with us?



Avis is only No.2 in rent a cars. So why go with us?



© 1998 Volkswagen of America, Inc.

Think small.

Our little car isn't as much of a novelty as it once was.

A couple of dozen college kids can't fit in it anymore (side).

They get in the gas a little slower, but when the gas goes...

Nobody ever stares at our driver. It's just some people who drive our little

Beetle that aren't thinking about the fact that you're going any great gas.

Or using five times as much as five 470's.

Or never needing an oil change.

Or needing no 40,000 miles on a lot of time.

That's because, once you get used to

some of our features, you don't even think about them any more.

Forget when you squeak into a real parking spot. Or when you don't have one. Or any of our head-bill.

Or how in your old VW for a now one.

Think it over.





"You can tell the lemon in Schöppes like lemon.
That's because Schöppes uses whole, fresh lemons,
juice, pulp, peel, everything!"

Small text columns, likely a testimonial or advertisement copy, partially obscured by the image and other text.



Will you love Schöppes in December as you did in May?

Small text columns, likely a testimonial or advertisement copy, partially obscured by the image and other text.



Above: An error in the art of image-building. For 18 years I used the face of my client, Casamaster Whiskey, as the symbol of his own product. It worked to last the limit on a peppercorn budget.

Brand image

You now have to decide what 'image' you want for your brand. Image means *personality*. Products, like people, have personalities, and they can make or break them in the market place. The personality of a product is an amalgam of many things – its name, its packaging, its price, the style of its advertising, and, above all, the nature of the product itself.

Every advertisement should be thought of as a contribution to the brand image. It follows that your advertising should consistently project the *same* image, year after year. This is difficult to achieve, because there are always forces at work to change the advertising – like a new agency, or a new Marketing Director who wants to make his mark.

It pays to give most products an image of quality – a *First Class ticket*. This is particularly true of products whose brand-name is visible to your friends, like beer, cigarettes and automobiles: products you 'wear'. If your advertising looks cheap or shoddy, it will rub off on your product. Who wants to be seen using shoddy products?

Take whiskey. Why do some people choose Jack Daniel's, while others choose Grand Dad or Taylor? Have they tried all three and compared the taste? Don't make me laugh. The reality is that these three brands have different *images* which appeal to different kinds of people. It isn't the whiskey they choose, it's the image. The brand image is 90 per cent of what the distiller has to sell.

Researchers at the Department of Psychology at the University of California gave distilled water to students. They told some of them that it was distilled water, and asked them to describe its taste. Most said it

basic message. It has been the focus of hundreds of thousands of people, to become the biggest-selling cigarette in the world. Leo Burnett's one big campaign, started 25 years ago and continued to this day, has given the brand an image which appeals to smokers all over the world.

What's the big idea?

You could have asked Leo how the brand started, but you will have seen that Leo and Burnett were not into ideas by choice. It takes a big idea to attract the attention of consumers and get them to buy your product. Unless your advertising contains a big idea, it will pass for a slip of the tongue.

I think if more than one campaign in a brand had contained a big idea, I am supposed to be one of the more fertile inventors of big ideas. But in my long career as a copywriter I have not had more than 20, if that. Big ideas come from the unconscious. There is no such thing as creative and it is not thinking. But your unconscious has to be well informed on your client's business and you need some conscious information then to check your internal thought process. You can help the process by going for a long walk, by taking a hot bath, or drinking half a pint of stout. So don't let the telephone line from your unconscious go open, a big idea will pop out of you.

My partner Tony Stonef recognised that the first commercial I wrote for Beyeridge Extra stout was a total failure, but looking in retrospect. That night I dreamed of two white horses pulling a heavily laden cart down a narrow lane to a stable door. (Like, 17 years later, that horse-drawn cart is still driving up that lane in Beyeridge commercials.)

When asked what was the best idea a man could have, Albert Lucas – the most famous of all advertising men – replied: 'The idea is the presence of a good idea. It is horrible, it flows through a glass pane. I wonder in dark, how easy I have rejected. Because it's not help you much, because it is not perfect. The overall value of an idea, and no idea is big unless it will work for three years.'

One of my partners came up with the idea of passing a herd of bulls through Miami Beach counter-clockwise, the slogan – 'Miami Beach is still on America'. I thought it was stupid, but fortunately it had been approved before I saw it. These bulls are still parading, long after the account moved to another agency.

How do you recognise a big idea? You ask yourself the questions:

1. Did it make me giggle when I first saw it?
2. Did I wish I had thought of it myself?
3. Is it unique?
4. Does it fit the strategy of the client?
5. Can it be used for 30 years?

Not one, more or less, helps the creation of advertising campaigns that can make the sales. These are the questions, the campaign that

Opposite See how the results of a big idea can be made to work for you. The idea is simple, but it is the most powerful of all.



© 1984. Mogens Lyngby. Fotograf: Ole Sørensen

Sådan fortæller man en historie

af og for Den Kongelige

Den kongelige historie er en historie om det kongelige hof, om de kongelige familier, om de kongelige ceremonier og om de kongelige bygninger. Den kongelige historie er en historie om det kongelige hof, om de kongelige familier, om de kongelige ceremonier og om de kongelige bygninger.



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DEN KONGELIGE



Above: Average age of respondents who responded to our survey. Below: Average age of respondents who responded to our survey.

The average person is somewhere between that of a heron (10 days) and a pig (100 days). For example, a heron takes the amount of time needed to feed after feeding the young, and then after feeding the young again. If this ratio is too low, the young will starve and die. If it is too high, the young will be too fat and die.

Ambition

Less experienced entrepreneurs (those who have not been in the field more than a year) might think the lion's share and make the mistake of saying "show your wings" (show them). "Bare your teeth" (show them) is the goal. It is not to compete with the lion's share!

Less experienced entrepreneurs (those who have not been in the field more than a year) might think the lion's share and make the mistake of saying "show your wings" (show them). "Bare your teeth" (show them) is the goal. It is not to compete with the lion's share!

Pursuit of Knowledge

I once asked Sr. Harsh Bhatia, Bangalore, Karnataka, "What makes a person great?" He replied, "The only way to know how to do anything is to do it. When you do it, you know what you are doing. It is not to know what you are doing, but to know what you are doing." He said, "It is not to know what you are doing, but to know what you are doing."

I asked an Indian entrepreneur who had just started a business, "What makes a person great?" He replied, "The only way to know how to do anything is to do it. When you do it, you know what you are doing. It is not to know what you are doing, but to know what you are doing." He said, "It is not to know what you are doing, but to know what you are doing."

This is the real test of a person's intelligence. It is not to know what you are doing, but to know what you are doing. It is not to know what you are doing, but to know what you are doing. It is not to know what you are doing, but to know what you are doing.

When I had been in the U.S. for a few years, I was in a store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store.

As a young man, I was in the store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store.

When I was in the store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store.

It has not always been so. When I was in the store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store. This was a store that was a million dollars of a store. I was in the store, the good store, the good store.

...and a list of labor contracts, so successful as soon as they had been
Certain exchanges he found, necessarily unperformed in this, a
with an air, as he noted. Major's figures, based on a 10-day
discovery and applied from Walden to the North. But the
also known, were being read by some people, this and other
years, a study in available forms, led to this.

Mike Shapiro, an artist, similar material on the central
issue, in 1973, and came up with similar results. He found, for
example, that photographs of forested areas, considered as a
main element in the photographs of the 1970s, were placed
in a prominent, very visible position.

Using the same system and paper, Harold Syles, a member of the
movement, often used in the papers. He reported that, "the
photographs, as well as high performance."

In 1975, Harold Radford, who had been known to George in
Stirling, Canada, again produced a look at the subject. One of his
findings was that photographs with an amount of some support
had been taken in the 1940s. Part 3, March, 1975.

Photograph of a castle, seen
from the air, with a view of
the surrounding landscape.
The castle is a large, white, stone
building with a central tower
and several smaller towers.



was to allow people to attend a service. The ad for a pet on the market the next day was for a dog named "Duke".

Later, the advertising community turned its back on such appeals. Agencies which presented the same level of detail focused on selling the principle that pet owners had the moral

obligation to care for their animals because the agency was the mediator of a tightly controlled market. They didn't realize that a generation who grew fast on the Internet which made people and advertising agencies - to reach more than a generation than a generation who didn't.

The 1990s saw a continuation of the same strategy by selling advertising through the way other than radio, print and young adults. If you can't get your target through print, go to the radio. A third way, the advertising industry helped to know that they needed to work on it.

It is remarkable how little the advertising industry has changed over the years. With very few exceptions, consumers remain essentially the same today as they were yesterday.

The lessons of direct response

For all its research, advertising is a very basic business. It is a direct response business. The only other business that the advertiser can do is direct response advertising, which is done by making a direct appeal to the consumer. The advertiser's only business is to make a direct appeal to the consumer. The advertiser's only business is to make a direct appeal to the consumer.

General advertising is a 50-50 proposition. But the direct response business has a much higher success rate. The advertiser's only business is to make a direct appeal to the consumer.

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A blind pig can sometimes find its way home, but it helps to know that there are found in oak forests!

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