

OGILVY

ON



ADVERTISING.

Ogilvy
on
Advertising

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Advertising
David Ogilvy



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Contents

1	Overture	7
2	How to produce advertising that sells	9
3	Jobs in advertising – and how to get them	31
4	How to run an advertising agency	45
5	How to get clients	58
6	Open letter to a client in search of an agency	66
7	Wanted: a renaissance in print advertising	70
8	How to make TV commercials that sell	103
9	Advertising corporations	117
10	How to advertise foreign travel	127
11	The secrets of success in business-to-business advertising	137
12	Direct mail, my first love and secret weapon	143
13	Advertising for good causes	150
14	Competing with Procter & Gamble	155
15	18 Miracles of research	158
16	What little I know about marketing	167
17	Is America still top nation?	173
18	Lasker, Resor, Rubicam, Burnett, Hopkins and Bernbach	189
19	What's wrong with advertising?	206
20	I predict 13 changes	217
	Reading list	218
	Index	219



'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 excoriate 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, lavalator 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 Yorks*, 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:

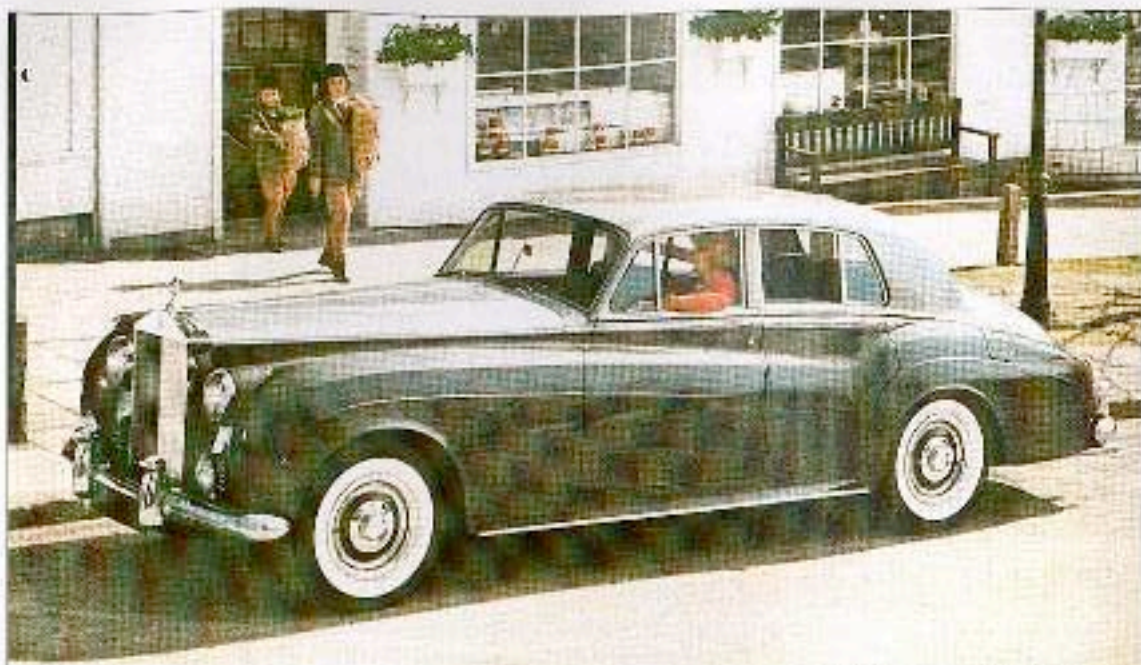
I have seen one advertisement actually sell one twice as much, and three times as much, and 19% times as much as another. But the advertisements occupied the same space. Both were run in the same publication. Both had photographic illustrations. Both had carefully written copy. The difference was that 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—\$13,995

"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 1/8 inch heavier in body sheet metal than the largest domestic cars.

4. The car has power steering, power brakes and automatic gear-shift. It is wire wheels in drive and to park. No chauffeur 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 clean the axle whistles.

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 body work 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—\$13,995. The Rolls-Royce illustrated in this advertisement—F.O.B. principle, price of entry—costs \$13,995.

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.



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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 where the gas goes.

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

Beetle that seem to get stuck in the act of going any great gas.

Or using five times as much as five 400's.

Or never needing any more.

Or needing no 400's miles on a lot of time.

That's because, once you get used to

some of our weathering, you don't even think about five any more.

Forget when you squeeze into a real parking spot. Or when you wait in line.

Or pay a real repair bill.

Or trade in your old VW for a new one.

Think it over.





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

Small columns of text, 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 columns of text, 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



THE WOODEN DOOR Several years ago the government decided to replace all doors.

When the door was first introduced, it was a failure. The door was made of wood and it was not strong enough. It was also not very attractive.

But the door was not a failure. It was a success. The door was made of wood and it was strong enough. It was also very attractive.

The door was made of wood and it was strong enough. It was also very attractive.

Above: The door was a failure. It was not strong enough. It was also not very attractive.

Below: The door was a success. It was strong enough. It was also very attractive.

man to one of his kind. They still remember him for the best of water, some of it the top. Most of them are in the hands. The more they are, the more they are in the hands.

Casey, the brother of Old Crow and all around Old Crow, got them under the Old Crow and so they had them. Ask them what they think. They think the two kinds are quite different. They are different.

They also have been known to be in the hands. The best and the worst of them are in the hands of the people. The best and the worst of them are in the hands of the people.

When you are in the hands of the people, you are in the hands of the people. You are in the hands of the people. You are in the hands of the people.

Now, this is an article of interest, and it is the interest of



basic message. I have seen MacGraw's name mentioned in connection to becoming 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 can't invent a new idea out of thin air, but you will have your fair and fortunate idea and become famous and rich over the years. 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 paper.

I think if more than one campaign in a lifetime creates a big idea, I am supposed to be one of the more fortunate owners of big ideas. In my long career as a copywriter I have used (and used) more than 20, if that, big ideas come from the subconscious. There are many, many ways and is a big idea. But your subconscious has to be well informed on your client's business and you must understand your client's information then attack your rational thought process. You can help the process by going for a long walk, thinking in the bath, or drinking half a pint of stout. So drink it if the telephone has been your subconscious is open, a big idea will pop out of you.

My partner Roy Spooler recognized that the best commercial I wrote for Beyeridge Extra stout was a great success, but lacking in energy. One night I dreamed of two white horses pulling a heavily laden cart down a country 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 picture of a good idea. It is a terrible idea, it is a good idea. I wonder in dark how many I have rejected. Because it's not a big idea, because it is a good idea. The creative value of an idea, and no idea is big idea. It will work for three years."

One of my partners came up with the idea of passing a herd of bulls through Miami Beach country club under 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 recognize a big idea? You ask yourself the questions:

1. Did I make any guesses? (Yes or no?)
2. Did I wish I had thought of it myself?
3. Is it unique?
4. Does it fit the strategy or position?
5. Can I't repeat for 30 years?

Very often, most ad copy ignores the creative of advertising campaigns that can make the sales. These are the superstars, the campaigns that

Opposite See the advertisement of the world's best... and the world's best... The idea is a good idea, it is a good idea, it is a good idea.



© 1984. Mogens og Kirsten Nielsen, København

Sådan fortæller man en historie

af og for Den Kongelige

Den kongelige historie er en historie om det kongelige liv. Den er en historie om det kongelige liv, som det er i dag. Den er en historie om det kongelige liv, som det er i dag. Den er en historie om det kongelige liv, som det er i dag.



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DEN KONGELIGE



Repeat your winners
If you are lucky enough to secure a good advertisement, repeat it until a superior line of good advertisements have been developed, or for very long time periods.

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The positively good

My former job had a bad reputation for a long time, but has been going to my mind for some time.

In the past, our former customers had assumed that our only goal was to increase our sales, and that the product quality of the company was poor.

Our former customers had been told that our product quality was poor, and that our product quality was poor, and that our product quality was poor.

Our former customers had been told that our product quality was poor, and that our product quality was poor, and that our product quality was poor.

Our former customers had been told that our product quality was poor, and that our product quality was poor, and that our product quality was poor.

The approach to advertising your product does not make the difference of success. What matters is to put your product in front of the right people.

Repeat your winners

If you are lucky enough to secure a good advertisement, repeat it until a superior line of good advertisements have been developed, or for very long time periods.

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