

Can Advertising Be
The Solution To All
Your Business
Problems?

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Can Advertising Be The Solution To All Your Business Problems ?

Advertising Intoxication
Discourage the Man Who
Promises That Advertising Will
Cure All Business ILLS

“Have you ever heard of advertising intoxication? It is a malady which seriously affects the judgment of newcomers in advertising. They see several advertising.

The old-time advertising man promised everything. Just give him a bottle - a fancy label - and advertising. A fortune was guaranteed. He could increase your sales from 1000 per cent to 10,000 per cent in a few months and if that percentage wasn't large enough, he would quote you a bigger amount. The quality of your product didn't matter. The magic of his advertising was all that was necessary.

Unfortunately, there are present today numerous descendants of the old-time advertising man. Under stress of competition they will often make promises that only miracles can fulfill.

I have just read a letter from an office which says : "We didn't get the Blank account because a newly established agency guaranteed a sales increase of thirty-three and one-third per cent within one year with the proviso that they themselves would pay half the cost of the advertising campaign if the quota was not reached."

The product to be advertised is not important. The manufacturer has a large, successful business, and with competitive conditions as keen as they are, a ten per cent annual sales increase would ordinarily delight him.

While advertising plays an important part in the success of most businesses, it is only one of the many spokes in the business wheel.

First, and most important of all, is administration. No business can succeed in a big way without proper direction and vision.

Then comes the product — its quality and its features.

Another consideration, how it compares with competitive merchandise is in value, price, uniformity, appearance, together with the size of the natural market for the product.

Another factor is the factory and its ability to keep step with the activities of the sales department.

More important than that are the operations of its research department and their endeavor to lower manufacturing costs by developing improved machinery or a higher quality of merchandise.

Of course, the financial affairs of the corporation are vital. Without intelligent direction and careful handling of the purse strings, no company can endure.

Then comes the sales organization — its relation with the trade, its ability to secure adequate and enthusiastic distribution.

The general reputation of the company is important.

So is the esprit de corps that should flow through the entire organization. Advertising can only hope to succeed to the greatest degree if all the other spokes in the business wheel are functioning properly. If there are weak departments the campaign is inevitably doomed to mediocrity or eventual failure.

The able executive realizes the importance of these parts of his business and can well afford to smile at the effrontery of the advertising man who, with only a smattering knowledge and no intimate study of his method of management, can calmly guarantee a substantial sales increase.

There are many variations of advertising intoxication — some not as serious as others. All, however, are detrimental.

One of the most common of these is idea intoxication — a malady possessed by many executives who, in spite of the productivity of their present advertising, continually insist on injecting new and sometimes diametrically opposed ideas into it. Then,

too, there are those who refuse to advertise except when new, dynamic ideas are presented.

"One dynamic idea is worth one hundred bromidic advertisements," they say. Such thoughts as the necessity of continuity and persistency are unspeakable to them.

"Advertise when you have something to say, then when the public sees your advertisements it will always read them because it knows that they contain real messages." The theory looks all right — but the public has a brief memory and seems to buy the merchandise that is most often brought to its attention. Should these same executives endeavor to run their sales departments on such a theory they would be out of business in a very few months.

A close relation of idea intoxication is stunt intoxication. Here you have the executive who wants to do something unusual. He cannot realize the difference between interest in the product and interest in the stunt.

I have a pet story that often puts over a sound advertising campaign and defeats several stunts that have been suggested.

"Suppose you saw a friend walking down the street without his shirt. You certainly would look at him, wouldn't you — so would

every- one else — but would you speak highly of him and recom- mend him to your friends as a stable member of the community? That is the way stunt advertising usually reacts. People speak about your stunt, but it doesn't put over the salient features of your product."

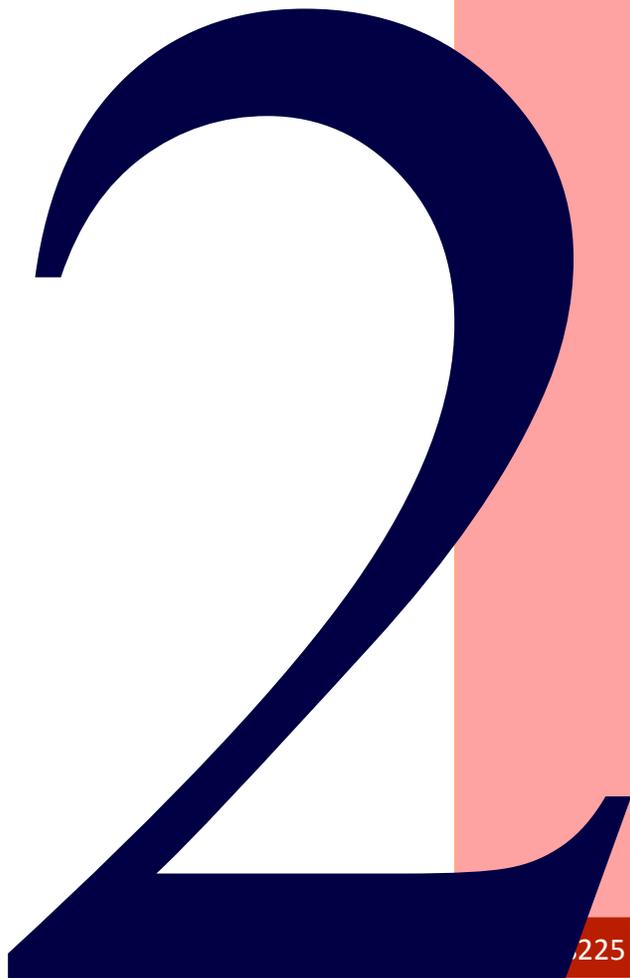
To some, typography is every- thing. To others, the art must take up sixty-two and forty-four-one- hundredths per cent of the advertisement, or it is obviously a poor one. To

others it must follow their lay- out or it cannot hope to win their approval and commendation.

Some organizations suffer from re- search intoxication. Research is valuable — it is often essential to the success of a campaign, but it cannot be carried to extremes beyond reason. There comes a time for action and an end to research — but this time never seems to approach in the operation of certain organizations. They hope to perfect every point in advance to such an extent that each microscopic objection will have been anticipated.

In theory their operations are sound. But valuable weeks and months, and sometimes years, speed by while their research continues, and by the time their findings are complete, competi- tors have attained an almost impregnable position. Moderation is essential in all things, and advertising is no exception.

Can Advertising Be The Solution To All Your Business Problems ?



The Dangers of Variety
The Stern Business of Making
the Consumer Ask for Your
Product Can Best Be accom-
plished by Picking One Major
Sales Argument and Sticking
to It.

Is advertising a toy for the advertiser to play
with and change and change and everlastingly
change in order to indulge his high estimate
of his own opinions?

Is it an exposition of art in which he may show the public his knowledge of art? Is it literature by which he may "tell the world" of his genius as a writer? Is it a circus with which he may fancy he is flabbergasting the universe with a vast variety of advertising acrobatics?

Advertising, as I understand it, is a method by means of which the advertiser can induce the consumer to ask for his brand of goods.

This is accomplished not by changing advertisements or by confusing the consumer or by gratifying the advertiser's conceit. It is achieved by repetition, by the repetition of a selling argument; preferably, by the repetition of a single selling argument. Advertising ought to be called repetition instead of advertising, for that is its whole substance. Without it advertising is nothing; the greater its repetition, the greater its success.

If we agree on that, then the question is, what are we going to repeat? It is easy enough to figure out where; the problem is what. We cannot repeat advertisements that are changed all the time. They are not repetition. They are confusion.

Varied appeals bewilder the dumb and indifferent consumer, and require him to dig laboriously into the changing advertise-

ments in order to find out what they are striving to "put over." And the consumer, being lazy of mind, does the easier thing: he merely passes on to the advertisements which tell him and "sell" him quickly.

That being the case, what can we repeat? Only a single selling argument, and a picture appropriately illustrating it. In every piece of Product there are several selling arguments, but nearly always one major argument.

You cannot repeat the major and minor arguments. If we try to repeat all of them, the consumer will never absorb any of them. Therefore, repeat only the major- argument — the one which appeals to most of the consumers — and forget the rest. Never mention them. Reduce it to a slogan and illustrate it, and then reiterate that slogan and that illustration until they etch themselves into consciousness.

The advocates of the changing

Confusing style of advertising argue that if you hear the same music all of the time you get sick of it ; that if you see the same advertisement all of the time you will not read it. But if you have different advertisements, the consumer will be entertained and attracted and thereby lured against his will into reading them.

That is fine, provided that you can make each advertisement entertaining and absorbing; but the mere changing of them does not accomplish that, and to make each always so entertaining that it will be irresistible, is a consummation devoutly to be wished for, but wholly impractical. It is impossible even in the arts. The greatest composers never wrote more than a half dozen or so songs that were really entertaining, so how can we expect the business of advertising to produce a myriad of changes each of which will sweep the consumer off his feet?

The whole advertising business, composed of many brilliant people, is striving every day to make advertisements entertaining. How many are succeeding?

The weakness in the theory of changing advertisements is that the advertiser does not make the changes as interesting to the consumer as he thinks he does. They are for the most part entertaining to the men who make them or direct the making of them.

They are made to please the advertiser.

He is the audience; and he labours under the delusion that what pleases him will please the consumer. Again, I repeat, advertising is not a plaything, nor is it art, literature, a circus or a stage. Advertising

is business, is the stern business of making the consumer ask for Product, or at least accept it willingly — all of which can be best accomplished by finding the most effective selling argument and picture. Having found them, why change the advertisements and fly to other ills that we know not of?

When Henry Ford found the type of automobile that would run, give satisfaction, and bring in money, he did not change it for nineteen years. He is the only business man I know who had sense enough not to change his money-making formula. But when a manufacturer turns to advertising, he must have variety: not to please the public but himself. He forgets that the consumers do not see his advertisement as often and as intensely as he does. They only glance at it, and they can glance at it for years without tiring of it. But even if the consumer does tire, he sees it, and it registers at a glance, without requiring him to read through it in order to find out what it is all about.

If a constant change of advertisements is right, why not change your name and trade mark in each?

I once told Mr. Kellogg of Corn Flakes fame about the series of Cushman Parker's paintings of children which were being published for Beech- Nut.

He said: "Paintings? I always thought you were using only one painting. They all look alike to me." If a great advertiser like Mr. Kellogg, who is keenly interested in advertising, did not notice the constant changes, how much less does the un-sophisticated consumer notice? After all, they are slight. The general style of an artist is the same.

Constant changing makes confusion enough in the consumer's mind, but not content with that most advertisers get themselves involved in still another form of complexity, to wit: Many an advertising campaign has different styles of advertising mixed up in it.

The magazine and newspaper advertisements are made by the advertising agent. He works up his style and then the outdoor company independent of him sells the advertiser an outdoor campaign. The agent is not consulted and the campaign becomes another type of advertising on the same Product. Then the street car people, and some lithograph house do something different. Then come the trade paper men, the novelty sellers, the booklet printers, the package makers and the direct mailers, and they develop several other types of advertising. This makes about nine kinds of advertising on one product or one line of products.

With all of these and a change of copy and art on each advertisement, what kind of campaign is it? Is it repetition of a single selling argument ?

It is simply confusion.

And these confusion campaigns cost probably twice as much as a one ad-repetition campaign. But suppose these advertisers who are spending Rs 50,000 to 10,00,000 and more were to sit down and take a leaf out of some successful advertiser's Book of experience and say to themselves:

"I am going to spend 10,000 or 25,000 or even 1,00,000 if necessary to find the selling argument and picture which will make the consumer ask for my brand. When I find it, no clever salesman is going to sell me any more confusion advertising. That selling argument, slogan, and picture is going on my letterhead, on my packages, on my packing cases, on my bill heads, on my trucks, in my magazine and newspaper advertising, in my car cards, on all my outdoor stuff, in my store displays. Everywhere you will see this same slogan and picture plastered — displayed all over the country.

"I will never change it, no matter how much criticism is heaped on me: no matter how many people tell me they are sick of it. By this

method I will prove that I can cut my 5,00,000 appropriation in half and get many times the showing and many more sales."

Very few advertisers, however, will adopt this policy, because they want to play with their advertising. They want the fun of getting up new variety. They want to exploit their intelligence. They cannot believe that their judgement as to what is best can be wrong. They want to say to their friends: look at my wonderful advertising - I'm the boy who did it. Everybody is talking about my advertising - about my idea about me!"

Repetition is a lost art but any advertiser who can use it and who is willing to put his advertising on a business basis, can enlarge the look of his campaign and get increased sales beyond anything I could make him believe at this writing.

Can Advertising Be The Solution To All Your Business Problems ?

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**Let the Comments Come
In on Order Forms
Don't Be Misled by
Superficial Comments from People
Who Think Your
Advertising Is "Cute" or "Nice"**

The gold bricks of advertising seem to have a lasting lure. Advertisers are constantly buying them. Worse than that, advertising men are always being bounced by the

The gold bricks of advertising seem to have a lasting lure. Advertisers are constantly buying them. Worse than that, advertising men are always being bounced by them.

They strive so earnestly for superlative values of attention, brevity, cleverness or beauty in their advertisements that they quite forget to test the material beneath, and so fail to discover base metal where true selling value should be. Attention, brevity, cleverness and beauty are excellent qualities in advertising, but they are merely the plating over the selling message.

A well-plated gold brick is a credit to its maker only if it is pure gold beneath the plating. You cannot say, of advertising, that there is only one way in which it should be done — that ever way but your own way is a "gold brick." In a given case, there may be one way that is better than others for that particular purpose. Even mediocre advertising gets some results if you do enough of it. There is room for different ideas, and the longer we study advertising methods, the more tolerant we tend to become.

On the basis of that experience I will discuss in this article four varieties of superficial plating that can make advertising appear to be good when it may be almost worthless.

Attention is the first.

Nowadays, everybody is interested in advertising; not only the advertiser, and the advertising men who work for him, but also the public that reads his advertisements. This interest takes the form of criticism or commendation. People say, "There's a good advertisement," or "What a rotten ad!" although they are merely readers — consumers of advertised products.

Your wife, your children, your friends at the club, will speak of a showy advertisement with admiration — because it has attracted their attention by some ingenious catch-line, or picture, or type arrangement, or leading idea — and pronounce it a wonderful piece of advertising. But they are content with admiration. It is quite possible that no sales resulted ; because there was nothing in the text of the advertisement to make them read, consider the goods offered, and buy. Such an advertiser's gold brick was unprofitably plated with attention.

It is a common experience to find people who admire "different" advertising confessing that they do all their buying from Brand X — "But Brand X is a remarkable advertiser, don't you think?"

It is gratifying that advertising should have so captured public interest. But we should be more gratified if people treated it as they do the glass in a show window, rather than have them take so much interest in how the glass is made, in its size, shape, and color. This public interest is a danger to the advertising man. He becomes self-conscious, and strives to attract attention to his work. It is perfectly natural, and human, to try to create advertising that will arouse reader comment, be reproduced in the business press, and perhaps win prizes. Those are all goals worth striving for; but only if the advertising also has the substance that sells goods.

An attention-compelling advertisement may be like some salesman who stutters. It will attract attention, and talk a lot, but not sell anything.

At one time a man of ours — no longer with us — was going to a big prospect. I suggested that he call on, and help us form a business connection, which he agreed to do. When he came back from Seattle, he reported a pleasant conference. After a second visit he mentioned spending time with the man, and on the third trip said they now called each other by their first names. A little later I met the manufacturer, who spoke enthusiastically of our representative. "By the way," he asked, "who is he with, anyway?"

As an attention-compeller, that fellow was a wonder. As a salesman, he reminded me of a good many much- admired advertisements.

" LOOK at this advertisement," says the average individual. "See how it stands out from other advertising. I am a busy man. I seldom look at advertisements. But this one attracted my attention immediately. Therefore, it is a strong advertisement."

And he lets it go at that. He doesn't read any further to see what the advertiser may be selling. That is a common viewpoint — one we have every reason to avoid in creating advertising — the gold plating of attention.

Brevity is another gold brick test of advertising value with the layman.

"People won't read long ads," you hear. "Advertising must be short and snappy. These are busy days — telegraph your message."

The truth is, advertisements of the past were shorter than those of today. In earlier years business concerns merely put a card

in the paper: "Jones & Brov TO, Undertakers. We aim to please." The trend now is toward longer copy.

Compare the ads in other well-known publication copy of today with the same advertising in magazines and newspapers yesterday. Poster effects have been dropped for de- tailed explanation that appeals to the reader's self-interest.

Advertising that says too little is just as bad from the selling standpoint as that which says too much.

Some years ago, I saw a single word painted on culverts and rocks — "XYZ" I thought it might be the work of the fanatic who paints "Prepare for the end." It looked like a mystic message. Not until several years later did I learn that it was a motor oil, and then nothing was said about its merits. This is certainly "confidential advertising." The theory probably was that it aroused curiosity. The practical result was that somebody paid good money to convey no message at all. He bought the brevity gold brick.

Brevity does not of itself make an advertisement interesting. I remember a double page advertisement of an etiquette book, printed in small type, which brought in thousands of inquiries.

LENGTH of copy does not depend upon flashing a message before your readers can get away from you, but upon making your story interesting. Nobody thinks of limiting the words of a salesman or his time. If you are advertising an automobile or a player-piano, or an electric refrigerating machine, or anything calling for a balanced decision, people will read every pertinent word you have to say, and then send for literature.

"That is all very well, where a large expenditure is to be made," is the objection that is often made, "but how about inexpensive articles?" The rule applies to many articles of small price which are important in other ways.

The man or woman who is thinking about health, or appearance, or the home, or the children, will read at considerable length to get all the facts. Insufficient information may meet the idea of brevity, but it won't sell the product. Brevity in such cases is a gold brick to the public as well as to the advertiser.

Advertising slogans compose a form of brevity which says too little. That has been shown by questionnaires, embodying supposedly well-known slogans, which were passed among advertising men. These professionals could not tell what more than eight in ten of the slogans were exploiting. Any audience of

intelligent people, men or women, will give several answers when they are asked to name the article advertised by "The skin you love to touch" or "Eventually - Why not now?" The slogans are remembered, but the article is forgotten.

Slogans, songs, gags and other evidences of apparent popularity are taken by the public to mean clever advertising stunts. They call forth admiration, and the advertising man, and the advertiser, may be just human enough to take credit for them. But if they do not glorify the product the credit is fictitious. This form of brevity is the thinnest kind of gold plating.

Cleverness comes right in here.

The fact is, people admire both attention value and brevity as clever stunts of the advertising man. "You can't beat that fellow for attracting attention," they say. "His advertising knocks your eye out, it's so clever." And of the short sentences and slogans of Jones they say, "He tells the whole story in a dozen words."

I KNOW many advertising men, and advertisers, too, who are unhappy because they never have achieved a clever slogan or an ingenious advertising character. I once felt badly about this

myself, but now I know I was lucky. The truth is that an advertising character burdens the copy with a double job — it has to put over the trade character as well as the product. And most trade characters of that kind succeed only in toting the cleverness, which is proved by the fact that few people can tell what any dozen of such characters advertise.

Since the public has taken an interest in the mechanism of advertising, it regards advertising men as funny, clever, smart. The truth is, most of the advertising men I know are average in intelligence, rather plain and hard-working. None wish to be regarded as professional cut-ups. Yet we put ourselves in that class with clever advertising. To make advertising truly clever that quality should go through the entire brick. Perhaps the most clever advertisement is the one which is read without any thought that it is a selling message.

Beauty is the last of our lures.

IT has a legitimate place in much advertising. Every advertiser wants his advertising to be beautiful. So there is the temptation to make advertising beautiful, whether the product calls for a beauty appeal or not.

When beauty is in the product, in the form of the appetizing color of a food or of the feminine beauty that goes with a toilet preparation, then it may legitimately form the attraction for advertising that goes further than the traditional skin-deep and sells the article. But a plating of beauty is too often put onto advertising not suited in character. There are, in fact, a good many products that attract by their very homeliness, like a well-bred bull-dog.

How much of the product does the advertising sell?

That is the standard by which to measure the value of advertising. And instead of what is the popular comment about attention, brevity, cleverness and beauty, the pertinent question to you, who prepared the advertising, or to your client, who paid for it, is

"What are people saying to each other about the goods?"

What every advertiser needs is. not a few dozen friends to tell him that his advertising is wonderful, but an army of recommended.

Let the comments come in on order forms.

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