HIGH IMPACT:

How YOU Can Create Advertising that SELLS!

by
Gary Austin Witt, Ph.D.

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“HIGH IMPACT”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

HIGH IMPACT:

How YOU Can Create Advertising that Sells!

The Psychology of Effective Advertising

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this book of practical advice on creating effective print advertising, brochures, and other messages promoting your product or service. This book is written for amateurs, those who know little or nothing about advertising. This book won't make you a pro, but it will help you create good print ads and brochures. With this book and your own common sense, you CAN do it! You will feel like you've been taken by the hand and led through the process, allowing your natural creative ideas to express themselves in an effective ad.

Who should use this book?

(1) Those who are in business and want to sell more.

(2) Those who are starting a business, including a home-based business, and want to improve their odds for success.

(3) Those who are dissatisfied with the current results of their print advertising and brochures. (4) Those in advertising who want to understand how their techniques work on the human mind, and maybe add a few new ones.

(5) Students taking business-related courses who want to improve their skills.

(6) Sales people who want to understand more about the psychology of buyer behavior.

(7) Those who are just interested in that fascinating subject -- how the buyer's mind works in our complex, high impact consumer society. Whatever your interest, you'll find powerful, useful, interesting ideas that you will use for many years, whether you start at the beginning or just browse.

This is not a textbook. It is more like a workbook for those who want to create effective print advertising. What does "effective" mean? It means the ad will grab the reader's attention, create interest in your message, present that message persuasively, and create a desire to check out your product or service. That's about all you can expect from an ad. And it's far more than most ads deliver.

The book is divided into chapters for each stage of the creative process.

Chapter One gives you the basic understanding of how and why most people buy. You must grasp the REAL reasons people buy if you are going to create an effective ad.

Chapter Two shows you how to build on that knowledge, using eight steps to plan an effective advertising campaign anchored in Psychological Marketing techniques.

Chapter Three shows you how to find or create pictures which will reach out and grab the reader’s attention -- without attention, your ad is just another piece of meaningless filler between articles.

Chapter Four shows you how to create headlines that hold readers’ attention and propel them into your sales message.

Chapter Five shows you how to write an effective sales pitch in your ad that will make readers want to look at your product.

Chapter Six shows you how to use some basic design tricks to make your ad or brochure visually appealing to readers.

Chapter Seven shows you how to apply these ideas to the design of an effective Internet Web site, including an Internet Evaluation Guide, *“65 Ways to Analyze and Improve Your Web Site.”*

Let me suggest that you have a high lighter and a pencil on hand. Mark the passages, ideas and stories that seem to have special meaning for you. Jot down notes in the margins (that’s why they’re overly wide) about how you could use these ideas in your business. Sometimes the ideas that spring to mind as you read will be the catalyst for a new marketing strategy which will open the way for expanded growth. Only you can apply these ideas to your particular situation and budget.

Please remember this: I didn’t write this book for you to read (though I hope you enjoy reading it.) I **wrote this book to give you a powerful money-making tool to use in your business** for many years to come, a tool to help you move that big boulder named Poor Sales out of your path. You must actively use this tool. Like a power drill, it won’t make the hole by itself. This must be a collaborative process between us. So, partner, let’s get started!

Good Luck,
Gary Austin Witt, Ph.D.

Managing Partner
Marketing Psychology Group, Inc.
Scottsdale, Arizona
480-425-8600

Professor of Marketing
Western International University

Chapter One

YOU AREN’T ADVERTISING A PRODUCT OR SERVICE, YOU’RE SELLING AN IDEA

Buying begins in the mind. If you don’t capture the buyer’s mind, you won’t capture his or her money. That is why the psychology of buyer motivation and behavior is critical for marketing success. It is called “Psychological Marketing.”

If buyers don't know your product or what it can do for them, they won't buy it. That happens to most products. Amazingly, over 90% of all products introduced into the marketplace are pulled within 24 months. Most of them failed because most buyers (a) never heard about them, or (b) never heard a persuasive message -- some despite enormous advertising campaigns. For example, did you ever try an Arch Deluxe at McDonalds? Not many people did, despite one of the most expensive advertising campaigns in American history, over $100 million! There’s a lesson for every advertiser here, deftly summarized by Yogi Berra’s statement, *“If the people don't want to come out to the ballpark, nobody's going to stop them "*

Your primary contact with potential customers is through your advertising . That might take the form of traditional ads, or brochures and direct mail. Most businesses have only one other opportunity to talk to potential buyers: at the point of sale where the product is displayed. But without good advertising, this opportunity is minimal.

While a good advertising campaign can't make a poor product successful (for long), a poor advertising campaign can destroy a good product. **Remember, advertising is nothing more than an opportunity to talk to buyers about how your product or service can satisfy their needs.**

Imagine that you were waiting in a hotel lobby. A man sits down across from you. You strike up a conversation. He mentions the product his company makes. Your company uses that type of product. You say, "*Tell me a little more about your product*." Do you want him to jump up and sing? Call in a line of dancing girls? Strip off his undershirt and look pouty? If you were bored, you may find some of it entertaining or interesting. But as a potential buyer, what you really wanted was enough information to decide if his product could fit into your company's purchasing mix.

Most companies approach marketing and advertising from the viewpoint of their product. They basically say, “Which features of my product will buyers like? Is it the fact that our car will go from 0 to 60 in 8.6 seconds? Is it the paint job with six hand-rubbed coats? Or is it the Bose sound system with six speakers?” Other marketers are a little more sophisticated. They also approach the problem from the viewpoint of the product,

but they recognize that the consumer will use the product for a purpose. These marketers say, "Which features of my product will help the buyer most? Is it the rapid acceleration? Is it the durable paint job? Or is it the experience of wrap-around sound from the Bose radio?"

Both of these marketers are looking at the problem from the wrong end of the telescope. Instead of focusing on the product, your advertising should focus on the buyer. Every buyer thinks they are far more interesting and important than any product or service.

Psychological Marketing approaches the problem of product persuasion from the viewpoint of the buyer. Psychological Marketers never start with the product. They begin by asking what important motivations does the buyer hope to satisfy through using or owning a product in your product class? Your product (or service) is like a lever. The buyer uses it to achieve some goal(s) that he/she can't easily do without your product. In other words, your product is just a means to an end.

That leads us to the fundamental principle of Psychological Marketing and Advertising: ***"People do not want your product or service. They want to satisfy their motivations.***"

You may have heard the old marketing saw*, "The customer doesn't need a drill bit, he needs a hole."* That viewpoint looks in the right direction, but not nearly far enough, unless the fellow just goes around drilling holes in the wall. He may need a hole, but what he really wants is a professional-looking bird house, spice rack, etc. He wants his wife to tell him how much she loves it, to admire his own handiwork, to feel proud when a family of birds come to nest. If it wasn't for these motives, he sure wouldn't waste time making a bird house, now would he? So you see that the hole also is just a means to an end. Once you lift your eyes up from his wallet to look the MENTAL reward he is seeking, you'll be ready to begin writing your ad.

Going back to our examples above, Psychological Marketers say, *"What motivates the buyer to purchase an automobile? Is it safety for his/her family? Is it value and low repair cost? Or is it ego, feeling like they're traveling in luxury?* ***When I know why they REALLY want it, then I'll know how to sell it to them.***" As you'll see below, not all of these motivations are easy to discover. Some of the most powerful are hidden motivators, which customers may not even admit to themselves during the buying process.

The Four Motivators

Sometimes companies and ad agencies loose sight of the central goal of most advertisements -- to inform the buyer (consumer or another business) about the product, and how it can satisfy their **four motivations for buying -- their needs, wants, fears, and desires.**

The fundamental purpose of advertising is NOT to entertain. Most often its purpose isn't even to sell the product. **The purpose of advertising is to convince (or "sell") potential buyers on the idea that they should seriously consider buying the**

product, and to motivate them to take the next step in the buying process. That next step may be going to the store or showroom, calling a sales representative, or looking at the company’s website. Once advertising has convinced the customer to take that next step, its job is done. It’s the job of the sales person to make them buy. Only in certain situations, such as catalog or Internet marketing does advertising carry the ball into the end zone.

Of course, advertising will convince some people to buy, especially if it is a lower cost item. But if you are creating the advertising campaign, it’s important that you begin with a realistic expectation about what your real job is -- getting the inquiry. Trying to take on too much will not only frustrate you, but will lead you to make decisions about the content of your ads which will make them weaker, not stronger. For example, if your radio ad for a pool cleaning system spends one-third of its :30 spot telling listeners two or three times to “go to your local Paddock Pool store and buy this amazing new system,” you’ve weakened your message in two ways: First, you’ve deprived yourself of :10 of valuable time to present or repeat the major benefits of the system; and second, you’ve make listeners feel like they are being pushed into buying. Yes, buyers need direction, but not demands.

Sometimes, advertising copywriters go just the opposite way -- they try to entertain at the expense of selling their MESSAGE. We see these ads every night on TV. The well-known “Dick” commercials for Miller Lite beer were a good example. Most every ad in the campaign was innovative, interesting, and funny, at least to men. But it didn’t sell more beer. The target market (younger drinkers) already knew about Miller Lite. They liked the ads. But it didn’t give them any good reason to ask for a Miller Lite. In fact, a lot of viewers couldn’t even tell you which beer the ad was pitching! Some falsely remembered the ad was for Budweiser or Coors. The end result? Miller actually lost market share with the Dick campaign.

That happens a lot. It is one reason viewers remember many well-done ads, but often can't recall the product advertised! Great for the agency, but bad news for the client trying to sell a product. It is silly to spend a lot of money and not make your point. It’s even worse when your ad helps your competition.

.Why do we have so many “cute” ads? Agencies love awards and peer recognition. Sometimes in their hurry to impress Addy Award jurors (the Addy Award is like the Academy Award for advertising agencies), they create visually arresting ads which don't effectively convey the message the client needed to tell the viewer, or that the viewer wanted to hear.

As Claude Hopkins, one of the true giants of advertising, said, "*Ad writers forget they are salesmen and try to be performers. Instead of sales, they seek applause*." Please don't make that mistake. Like the fellow in the hotel lobby, your job is to make a simple, persuasive pitch for your product, not audition for *Show Boat*. Sell the product, not the ad!

How To Use This Book

People go to school and work years in ad agencies to become professionals in advertising. You don't have that luxury, and probably can't afford to hire a pro right now. So this book is going to give you some simple guidelines about advertising. They are the same guidelines which I teach my graduate marketing students at the University. If you follow them, and use your own common sense, you should be able to create effective print ads, brochures, and flyers which will persuade your audience to take a closer look at your product or service. Your ads won’t win awards, or be praised for their clever themes. What they will do is present the messages about your product or service which are most likely to persuade customers to come take a look at what your selling.

These research-proven psychological techniques focus primarily on media advertising, but many are applicable to in-store promotions and marketing strategy, even Internet advertising. In fact, many of the psychological strategies offered here are just as applicable to selling yourself as they are to selling your product or service. They are equally applicable to products or services. If you sell a service, when you read the word “product,” think of your service.

Three Keys You Need:

Any advertising message requires three things to be effective: (1) People must notice it. -- it must attract their attention. (2) It must give the buyer reasons to consider the entire message, not just glance at the headline. (3) It must present that message in a way that is clear and persuasive to its target buyer. The guidelines in this book will help you meet all three requirements as you construct your print ads and brochures.

Business-to-Business:

Many companies sell to other businesses, not directly to consumers. If you use advertising or print materials to market your product or service, these guidelines are definitely for you. Remember this fundamental idea -- even though you are technically selling to a company, you are really selling to a few people working for that company. Whether they are sitting at home deciding on which leaf blower to buy, or sitting at their desk deciding on which computer system to buy, they are motivated by the same thing -- trying to satisfy as many of their needs, wants, fears and desires as possible. Some of these motivations are tied to the company (“I can’t go over budget.” “All our computers need to be compatible.”). Others are personal (“If I do good on this contract, I’m in line for a promotion.” “Isn’t the CEO’s son a rep for IBM?” “If I make a mistake, I’m gone.”)

By using the guidelines presented here to analyze both the corporate and personal motivators of your target buyers, you will dramatically increase your chances of grabbing and holding the attention of these busy executives. The product may change, but the psychology of appeal remains the same.

Please, Do NOT Do This...

You should not blindly apply these techniques, or guidelines. Use your common sense. (If you don’t have common sense, put this book down now!) For example, if you decide to employ a technique like "*use bright colors to attract initial attention to your ad*", you would be foolish to use a dozen bright colors in the ad, or make every word bright red. Such blind applications do more harm than good. In general, the old adage of "*moderation in all things*" is good advice in advertising.

Also, don’t apply a few techniques, run the ad, and expect miracles. Even the best advertising isn’t magic (no matter what the ad agency execs tell you!). Even if you were giving away the secret to eternal beauty, it would take more than a few ads to knock down your doors, people are just too suspicious of advertising claims today (with good reason). Be realistic about what advertising can do for you, and what results to expect.

Finally, don't pick one or more techniques, apply them to your existing ad, and run it. Even Thomas Edison tried hundreds of ideas before finding the right filament for his light bulb. If he had stuck with his first idea, it would be pretty dark around here. You should try at least a half dozen different new ways to redesign your ad, and preferable many more. Chances are the first one you come up with won’t be your best one.

Try one technique or combination, then another one, and so on. When you're done, compare the sample ads against each other. Ask your family and friends, even customers you trust, to give you their ideas, too.

Most importantly, try to evaluate how clearly and forcefully each ad **stimulates** then **satisfies** the needs, wants, fears, and desires of your target buyers. Also look closely at how simple and clear the ad copy (the words) are. The best ads are simple and easy to understand. **If a twelve year old child cannot understand your ad, it’s too complicated**.

If you wanted to be scientific, you could ask people, even casual acquaintances, to rate your top five ads. Ask them which of the following opinions they have about each sample ad:

1) “It makes me want to buy or learn more about the product.”

2) “It seems like a good ad.”

3) “Nothing much grabbed my interest or attention, but that's probably just me.”

Ask them to select from the following answers: “Strongly agree.” “Agree.” “Neither Agree or Disagree.” “Disagree.” Or “Strongly Disagree.” Calculate the average of each answer and see which one has the best scores.

Tips Helpful For All Print Media

If you are a small business owner, nearly all of your advertising will probably be printed -- display and classified ads, flyers, brochures, and so on. Even your letters to current and prospective customers are advertising. Most print ads are in magazines or newspapers. While the first chapters of this book will be discussing "display" ads (the

sort of ads you see scattered throughout a newspaper or magazine), you can also apply much of this information to other forms of print advertising, including Classifieds. Flyers and brochures, for example, are designed using all the same principles as display ads. The chapters on Headlines and Body Copy are important to look at if you’re using e-mail advertising to attract interest. If you use electronic media like radio or television, you’ll find that many of these ideas are directly applicable in writing your scripts. And, of course, you’ll find nearly all of the material is useful in Web site design, especially as you write the copy for its pages, and select the graphics to use.

WORK SPACE:

Take this space to begin planning your print ad campaign. Put down your preliminary ideas and thoughts. It will help you get more out of the material that follows.

1) **WHAT IS YOUR GOAL FOR THE AD CAMPAIGN?** (Be as specific as possible, and use concrete statements, not indeterminate ones like “sell more.”)

2) **WHAT IS THE THEME FOR YOUR AD CAMPAIGN?**

3) **WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF YOUR AD CAMPAIGN?**

4) **OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR AD CAMPAIGN:**

Chapter Two

SEVEN STEPS IN PLANNING YOUR PRINT AD CAMPAIGN

The Secret to Good Advertising

What is the key to good (successful) advertising? *“Be a good guide*.” Imagine you are like a guide in the African bush, taking your readers on a safari. What do they want? To have a good time, to learn something, to understand what they see, and to benefit from the journey. As you guide them on their journey through your advertisement, make sure that they get what they want from the trip so they will tell you, “It was worth it.”

Seven Steps To Planning Your Ads

Every ad should have a theme, a focus and a goal. Each element in the ad should contribute to the creation of the theme, attention to the focus, and attainment of the goal. These elements are found in a display ad in a newspaper or magazine, a flyer, brochure, Web page or other form of communication which involves messages presented by images and the printed word.

Each major element of a print ad or print piece -- headline, picture, and body copy -- are under the control of the ad’s creator. The skill with which he/she selects each of these elements and fits them together into a whole ad which is greater than the sum of its parts will determine whether the ad brings in business, or was a waste of money.

You should NEVER forget that ads are business. Unlike art, they do not exist for themselves, but to create a desired behavior -- buying. As such, they should always be viewed as business investments which will generate a certain return or profit. If you can sell as many widgets with an ad that costs $5,000 to create, don’t be lured into the trap of creating one for $10,000 that will only generate the same number of sales just because a friend says it looks more like art, or has more exciting pictures (*“Sure you could use a stock shot of the Grand Canyon,”* says your agency*, “but if you want to really make this baby sing, we should rent a plane and take some photos flying right into the Canyon! You’ll probably win an award for it.”*)

As you read the following steps in planning your ad, remember that its goal depends on what you want the ad to do, its theme depends on what you want its readers to do, and its focus depends on the particular motivations driving those readers. As you will see throughout this book, we believe every element in your ad should be selected on the basis of how well it fits with the cognitive and emotional motivations that influence your target buyers.

THE SEVEN STEPS IN PLANNING YOUR PRINT AD:

STRATEGY. Get a yellow pad and a few pencils. Find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted. You've got some heavy thinking to do. Take your marketing materials and product photos with you. Study them closely. Read the Four Key Types of Buyer Motivations below. Then look at each of the following questions in turn, writing down the answers to each of them on your pad. As you do this, you will be focusing your attention on the most important ideas in creating YOUR advertising campaign -- the real reasons your customers buy – and it isn't your product!

Focus on the Four Key Types of Buyer Motivations

There are four types of primary motivators you must consider: Your buyer's needs, wants, fears and desires. Your customers may need something from your product class.

“Needs” are those motivations which MUST be met by using or owning the product. For example, people who buy Windex need clean glass and mirrors.

They want something from your product, too. “Wants” are those motivations which buyers would sure like to satisfy, but they aren't requirements. Windex buyers want the job of glass cleaning to be as fast and easy as possible. our customers buy what you sell.

Their **fears** are of two types -- omission and commission. “Omission” fears are fears of the status quo -- the negative results of leaving things the way they are. If my tires are bald, I fear the results of a blowout. Windex buyers may fear the negative feelings about themselves that will be created by looking at dirty mirrors, or having others see their dirty windows. “Commission” fears are fears of making the wrong choice. Choices usually involve a financial component (what you paid), a time component (how much time you spent choosing the product and then using it), and an emotional component (your self-esteem and the esteem of others related to making the “right” or “wrong” decision.) Whether you spend five months and a million dollars on a new Web site or five minutes and twenty dollars on a new book, you have a fear about making the wrong choice. The difference is only one of degree. The glass cleaner buyer fears the frustration and self-criticism upon seeing streaks remaining on mirrors and glass. (*“Good value! Ha! Look at this lousy job. Really good choice I made. Three bucks down the drain. Now I'll have to go right back to the store for some other cleaner. I'm sure as heck not going to let Bob's mother see this mirror!*”)

And finally, they **desire** something from your product. Desires are like hopes or daydreams -- some satisfaction that isn't expected, but wonderful to think about. Women buying mirror cleaners may hope that their husband or mother-in-law praises the shine on the bathroom mirror, or the mirror stays spot-free for days. “Desires” differ from “wants” in that consumers expect most of their “wants” to be met by the product they select. But if our desires are met, it is a unique and pleasant surprise.

Careful analysis of each type of motivation can open up tremendous possibilities to seduce the buyer. Many advertisers only focus on what they *think* are the buyer’s “needs” and “wants.” While they are important, Needs and Wants are usually logic-based ideas, like “*I need a car to get to work*.” Logic is important, but the most powerful events in our lives are seldom logic-driven. Romance, birth, death, war and sex drag our behavior this way and that through our emotions. We often behave because of what we Feel, not because of what we Think.

Advertisers often overlook the power of “Fears” and “Desires,” emotions which cry out wordlessly to be satisfied (like *“I desire a sleek, red sports car to make me feel young and attractive to women.*”) Often a buying decision is made by finding logical reasons to satisfy emotional motives. Life insurance, for example, is at its heart is a product marketed through fear -- fear that you will die and leave your family destitute. That fear creates guilt, which can only be reduced by . . . buying life insurance! You see, it is still the same carnival barker offering to satisfy a motive we have, an emotional motive which he first stimulates, then promises to satisfy.

STEP 1) WHO? Who are your customers? Who do you want as customers? Is that realistic? Are there other customers you have something to offer? You can probably sell your product to several different groups of people, especially if you can make minor modifications for each group.

Begin by writing down all the different CLASSES of customers you could target. (For example, seniors, youth, Asian, working women, high income, HR directors, etc.) Now, for EACH group, describe the subset of customers you could help. Describe them as fully as possible -- age range, sex, education, probable interests, amount of free time, geographic location, where they live, social class, income level, size of family, race, ethnicity, where they shop now for your product, what and how much they buy of your product class, etc.

If your customer is a business, answer these questions for everyone who will make a critical decision about buying your product, especially the “gate keepers” who control the process. Also, describe the company, its products, and its purchasing process, being mindful of potential opportunities and pitfalls. As you write down the characteristics of your target, you’ll see more clearly the best approach for each person in the chain, and (hopefully) the approaches which are likely to fail. Like an archer, if you don’t know where the target’s bulls eye is, it’s pretty hard to hit it.

You probably recognize these categories as buyer “demographics.” They give you a snapshot of your most common buyer. Many business people, and even advertising professionals, often make advertising decisions on these demographic numbers alone. That is a mistake. Demographics give you some important information about your target buyers -- they help you create an image, a mental snapshot. But you cannot market to a snapshot.

Go find a picture of someone you don’t know in a magazine. By looking at the snapshot, you can tell the person’s age, race, sex, social class, and rough income level,

perhaps even more. What you can't see is inside their head, the place where the inner demographics -- called *psychographics* -- run wild. **Psychographics** describe the motivations and attitudes of groups of buyers. It's here inside the minds of buyers that the real action takes place. Buying ALWAYS begins in the mind. If you forget that, you're just trying to sell to a photograph.

STEP 2) WHY? Why do they want to buy your type of product or service? What are your target customers' real motivations for buying? These are the reasons buyers are driven to spend money on your type of product or service, whether it is food, home security, computer dating, banking, etc.

As noted above, buyers for other businesses have a double set of needs, wants, fears and desires. That makes their behavior more complex. They are weighing how well your product can satisfy both their corporate and personal needs. This makes it imperative that you research and analyze both the corporate and personal motivations of all the key people who will decide about your product. Having this understanding is key to making the right pitch, the one which convinces them that your widget can satisfy more of their "hot button" motivations than your competitors.

In general, people buy to satisfy a motivation. If you're hungry, you have a motivation to stop that hungry feeling. If you are afraid at night, you have a motivation to feel secure. If you are lonely, you have a motivation to feel loved. In the first case, you want food; in the second, protection; and in the third, companionship. Getting a full belly, protection, and companionship are the ways that you believe these problems (hunger, fear, loneliness) can be satisfied. That is why they buy -- they hope to exchange money for a full belly, security, and love.

This is a critical point. You read it once. Please read it again: **The first principle of Psychological Marketing is this**: ***"People do not want your product or service. They want to satisfy a motivation.***" They do not want your food when they are not hungry. They eat (most of the time) when a empty belly motivates them to seek food, or emotional distress motivates them to seek comfort. If they could snap their fingers or take a pill to feel full or comforted, many would do it, and do.

People especially do not want to give you their hard-earned money. To get their money, your advertising has to show them that they are NOT trading their money for your product, but **trading their money for satisfaction**. In other words, they are trading their money for a feeling. For example, you don't buy a lawnmower, you buy time and a pride in a neat lawn. You don't buy a sexy dress, you buy the feeling of pleasure at seeing looks of admiration and envy created by the dress. You don't buy a cellular phone, you buy the feeling of safety and a reduction in frustration. You don't buy mouthwash, you buy the assurance you won't offend others (honestly -- would you use mouthwash if you weren't going to see anyone?)

The more directly your ad tells people what they are really buying, the better your ads will be. The more your ad requires buyers to figure it out for themselves, the less

successful you will be. **Your highway to success begins with an understanding of the buyer's true motivations for buying.**

Do This: For each target group you've identified above, write down all the motivations you can think of or deduce (if you can afford to do some research, consider either a focus group or a survey. Look at my Web site *www.marketingpsychology.com* for more advice on doing buyer research.) See the Appendix article *"12 Steps in Consumer Analysis"* for more help.

Write down at least four specific motivators (at least one need, want, fear, and desire) you believe customers in each group have for buying a product like yours. Write down all the possible motivators you and others can think of.

Begin by asking this question: *"What does my buyer REALLY (need? want? fear? desire?) from my type of product?"* Put yourself in your customer's place. Shut your eyes and see yourself walking in your door as a new customer. See your store and your product class from his/her viewpoint.

For business customers, answer the question for each decision maker. For each decision maker, first imagine that they are wearing a hat reading *"I'm thinking of my company."* Then imagine they are wearing a hat reading *"I'm just thinking of me."* Together all these answers will give you a clearer picture of how your product will be judged by each buyer as they try to maximize their satisfaction.

Let me repeat this: Don't shortchange your consideration of "fears." Every fear is a hurdle you must jump in the race toward the bottom line. Your buyer can love everything about your product, but if a big fear is blocking the path, you're in trouble. (*"I love your widgets, John, and your price is great. But you've never met this big an order, and I'm worried that you can't deliver on time."*) There are always fears to be overcome.

Also, be sure to give full consideration to your buyer's "desires." Many products, like perfume and diet pills, are sold almost exclusively on the basis of promising to satisfy a desire.

How do you determine their motivations? The best answer is to talk to them. Be ready to ask questions which will help you discover the answers. You must listen carefully to their answers, their body language, their non-verbal messages. In addition, you can use an educated guess based on experience with them, conversations with others in the company, even talks with vendors of other products. You can even use my "*Buyer Psycho-Analysis*" test, available through our Web site. Understanding WHY your customer REALLY buys is critical information. It tells you what they want from your product or service. This is the foundation for all of your advertising decisions. Without it, you're like a pilot flying through the mountains in dense fog, or a blindfolded archer shooting at a target.

After you've made your list, cross off the least important motivators to a majority of your potential customers. Hopefully you have at least five to eight specific motivations which your buyers hope to satisfy by using your class of product or service. For example, *"I buy a kitchen cleaner because I **need** clean, germ-free countertops; I **want** to do the*

*kitchen and bathroom fast, using just one cleaner; I **fear** my family may get sick from germs on the countertop, and if I make the wrong choice, the germs could still be there and I wouldn’t even know it; and I **desire** to feel proud of how my kitchen looks, for my husband to say it sparkles. In my dreams!”*

You’ll notice that each of these psychological motivations are strong, relevant, and different. They center on a common idea -- the benefits of a clean kitchen in the mind of the mother, the primary buyer of kitchen cleaners. Some of these benefits are tangible, like a spotless countertop. Others are totally psychological, like pride, hope, and safety of her children. If your advertisements only focus on the tangible benefits of your product, you’re overlooking some of your most effective selling points.

I know this seems like a lot of work. It is. But if you were going to go hiking through India, wouldn’t you first do a lot of research about the area? Your marketing and advertising are only as strong as the foundation upon which they are built. That foundation is a detailed psychological analysis of why your customer REALLY wants to buy, coupled with a detailed psychological analysis of the features of your product that will make him/her want to buy from you. You will return to this analysis over and over to help you make decisions about countless issues -- because every decision ultimately is guided by your buyer’s motives.

Step 3) WHAT? What features of your product can meet the buyers’ Needs, Wants, Fears, and Desires? What features of your product better satisfy their motivations than your competition’s product? Your product has many features and attributes -- size, shape, functionality, color, weight, speed, etc. etc. Some will mean a lot to buyers, others won’t mean anything at all. Some features will mean a lot more to certain groups of buyers than others. The trick is finding out which ones matter (don’t be fooled -- it isn’t always the biggest, or most obvious, feature that will make the difference.)

If your product is about the same as your competition’s on some of the really important features, look for another way to make it seem different. Can this difference be used to satisfy some motivation of the prospective buyer? For example, most low-end pagers are about the same. But one manufacturer out-positioned his competition by offering young buyers pagers in bright colors. The motivation satisfied wasn’t a critical need, want or even a fear. It satisfied a desire of this buyer group to look “cool” and different from their parents.

Let’s look at a product like Windex. The customer needs clean, spotless mirrors and windows -- a functional feature of Windex is that it cleans mirrors and windows. She wants the job to be fast and easy to do -- Windex has a spray handle and doesn’t streak. She fears buying a poor value -- the Windex name is a guarantee of high quality and performance. She desires feelings of self-worth, accomplishment, pride and praise -- well, that should be shown in the ad -- *“Honey, this mirror is so perfect it’s like looking out a window*!” [Sure, its corny. But people like to hear what they want to hear, that’s been the formula for successful romantic courting for several thousand years. In fact, you’re here because it worked.] In just a few seconds you’ve already performed a limited

analysis of a product, identifying several features of Windex which are important to this customer by looking at the product from her point of view -- what does she need, want, fear and desire?

Do This: Get a piece of paper and make a two-column list: On the left side list the motivations your buyers want to satisfy. Then, on the right side list the specific product features which specifically satisfy each motivation. Your product may have several features which will help satisfy a single motivation. Conversely, a single feature may help satisfy several motivations. Once you've created the list, circle those features which appear the most often. Then underline the features which satisfy the strongest motivations. For example, a mother buying a kitchen cleaner would like an attractive bottle, but that feature isn't as important as the convenience of a spray handle. Finally, rewrite your list to include only those circled and underlined items. Put those features answering the strongest motivations at the top, circling the ones that appeared most often. Be sure to put the motivation which each feature satisfies in parentheses next to each feature -- you never want to forget the real reason each is on the final list. In reality, this isn't your list at all. It is your customer's list.

This list is the key to your advertising design. The Top Motivators and Major Product Features are the building blocks of your entire marketing strategy, and certainly of your advertising. Just ask yourself, does it make sense to tell buyers about features which don't interest them? No. Does it make sense to ignore the reasons they want to buy? No. **Basically, effective advertising convinces people that you can satisfy them.** Too often, ads are designed to satisfy the client or the agency, not the buyer.

STEP 4) WHERE? Where can you advertise to reach each of your targeted groups of customers most efficiently within your budget? What is the best, most cost-efficient way you can reach your potential clients with the money you have to spend? Will you use newspapers, magazines, flyers, brochures, radio, TV, the Internet, or other media? If you want to do TV, will you advertise on local morning news programs, targeted cable channels, late night, etc.? If you select the Internet, will you have your own website, buy banner ads on other sites or portals, advertise in e-zines (electronic magazines sent by e-mail), etc.?

You can see that the choices are many, and the decisions are far more complicated that you might think. Each specific selection will result in a different cost per look, and cost per sale. The trick is to determine which will give you the greatest value for your advertising dollar, while delivering ad adequate number of potential customers to your doorstep.

Pick the ones that will give you the best value for your available budget in reaching large numbers of your buyers**.** Be careful about these decisions. Almost any radio station, cable channel or newspaper will tell you they are the best choice for delivering the audience you want. It ain't necessarily so. For example, many small businesses have

spent wads of money on expensive television ads with little result, when targeted radio and newspaper ads would have been more effective for less money.

Do This:

1) Ask a lot of questions before deciding. Talk to other merchants, customers, media buyers. Consult with an advertising agency. They may give you good advice just for the opportunity to place your advertising, since most media outlets give established ad agencies a commission of 15% or more of the ad cost.

2) Be prepared to clearly answer this question: "*Why have I chosen this media outlet* (publication, station, website, etc.)?" Don't explain it to yourself. Try to explain it to your spouse or partner. If your answers don't sound reasonable as you explain it out loud, they probably aren't. It is important to target your advertising to just the right media outlets. Targeted ads are more effective, and usually cheaper. Its the difference between using a rifle and a shotgun. Any advertising outlet should only be chosen because it can deliver good message exposure to an important part of your target buyer group in a way that effectively presents your product or service.

3) Write down exactly what you hope to accomplish by advertising in each selected medium and specific media outlet. Do you want to generate leads, create walk-in traffic, build an image, introduce people to a new product, attract people to a seminar, etc.? Don't pick a medium just because it seems "good" or you've always wanted to be on TV. A horseman selects one type of horse to cut cattle, another to run in a race, and a third to pull a plow. The horse is selected by the goal to be accomplished. You should select your advertising outlet in the same way. If you cannot justify it on that basis, don't buy it!

STEP 5) EMPHASIS? What features should you emphasize to the readers of each publication?

As we've discussed above, your product or service has many features. Some will be of great interest to the particular readers of the publication in which your ad appears, other features will have less interest, and some none at all. (For example, the readers of Fortune may care little about the price of a new Cadillac, but desire to know about the luxury, high-tech and status features of the car. The readers of Money may be just the opposite. Yet both groups of readers are part of Cadillac's target buyer group. The most effective ad in Fortune would not be the most effective ad for Money.)

Discuss the characteristics of each media outlet's audience with its Advertising account executive. Ask for printed demographic data (statistical data about their audience.) They won't have psychographic information, but you will be able to see how many young women or rich men will be exposed to your message.

What you want to know is which publications and stations have the greatest number of readers/listeners/viewers who are similar to your target customers? Which ones will deliver these folks to you for the least cost-per-thousand? Those are only two of the questions you need to answer before deciding on specific media outlets -- and why the services of a good advertising or media buying agency are worthwhile.

Based on all the information you can gather about each outlet’s audience, logically select the features of your product which will have the greatest appeal and interest for this particular audience. Write them down. Now list them in a rough order of importance FOR THOSE BUYERS. You’re goal is to tell those people as clearly as possible how the features of your product can satisfy their particular set of needs, wants, fears, and desires. Your top feature might be “neon color” to a teen market, but “long battery life” to the teen’s mom. Pick you target , then pick the best ways to persuade that target.

STEP 6) WHAT’S YOUR IMAGE? If you want to build up your image, what image do you want to build with this particular audience?

One of your first decisions is to answer the question, *"Am I advertising to tell customers about my product, or to help build an image of my company?*" If you want to build an image, your ad will be far different than if you want to talk about your product.

Think of a typical McDonald’s TV commercial. McDonald’s food products are so well known that many ads are meant to reinforce specific feelings about the McDonald’s image. You’ll see happy families stuffing burgers and fries while laughing at simple jokes and just enjoying the experience of being together, at McDonald’s, of course. The image message? McDonald’s -- a fun place to eat with your family.

Others will combine image with promotions. When McDonald’s has a new product, such as the ill-fated Arch Deluxe, the ads focus more on the sandwich itself, and the benefits of ordering this particular meal. (Many adults still remember the catchy jingle used to advertise the Big Mac that began, *“Two whole beef patties, special sauce, lettuce . . .*”) Of course, the McDonald’s image is always reinforced by showing happy, laughing families eating their burgers. Many buying decisions have cognitive and emotional motivations to satisfy.

Taken as a body of work, the whole collection of McDonald’s commercials is one of the greatest examples of psychologically effective television advertising in history. The image it has painstakingly created has been the cornerstone of McDonald’s success for nearly a half century. Why? Because McDonald’s recognizes that they don’t sell food. They satisfy customers’ motivations -- hunger, thirst, companionship, fun, parent-child bonding, and happiness (in addition to saving time and giving good value.) In other words, what made McDonald’s a winner was the emotional rewards they promised to deliver to their customers with every Big Mac. The Golden Arches doesn’t just stand for food -- it stands for family fun.”

Other companies with similar fine, decades-old collections of psychologically effective advertising include Budweiser, Coke, Pepsi, and Nike. Kodak and Polaroid also have masterful collections which emphasize how precious and fleeting is our time with family, moments which can be captured on film. (Again, note the lesson -- their ads create the desire for loving times with family, raise the fear that it will all pass away, then offer to reduce that fear with their product -- film to capture those times forever.)

Apple Computer deserves a special mention for their 1999 series of television spots which are a textbook example of psychologically designed advertising. The visual

is simple. Actor Jeff Goldblum talks to the camera. What he says is the brilliant part of the ads, which are targeted toward all those Americans who don't own or use a computer, most of them over age 40. The ad recognizes that part of their reluctance is fear about not being able to use such complicated equipment. When selecting a computer, these customers want to buy simplicity, because that will reduce their anxiety.

The spot could have simply stated that fact: "*Anybody can use an Apple*." But in their limited time, the writers did something more clever -- they addressed the IMAGE of the computer industry and those who use them. "*You aren't one of those 'computer people*,'" says Goldblum (obliquely suggesting that the target audience is somehow above people that concern themselves with all that technical stuff. He goes on to say that the new Apple is not for those type of people, it is for YOU. *"You can use it and not be a computer person*." He reinforces this idea in another spot about the simplicity of sending e-mail by saying, "*It's as simple as licking a stamp."*

Notice that the spots don't explain ANYTHING about the computer. The writers recognize that people don't want to buy a computer. They want to write an instant letter to their daughter in Seattle, or look up the 12th President of the U.S., or see what's the best deal on a new Jeep. The ads don't <u>show</u> how simple it is. Even the simplest action on a computer can look complicated the first time. Instead, they just got an actor who rates high as "an ordinary guy," "trustworthy," and "likeable" to say, *"You don't have to be a computer person to use it. If you can lick a stamp, you can use an Apple.*" Brilliant!!!

Image ads should generally be done only if they will help you sell your product, either now or down the road. For example, if your company is in tight competition with others, then you may have a strategy to position your company as a high quality producer. An image ad can help to redefine your company as a quality organization in the minds of buyers. K-Mart has been trying to do this for years. But JC Penney did it, in part with a strong image ad campaign emphasizing those features women wanted in department store clothing -- name brands, smart looks, value, and inviting, up-scale surroundings.

Good examples of corporate image-making are found in Annual Reports, which go to brokers and opinion leaders as well as stockholders. These Annual Reports could be typed on a few pages and photocopied. Instead the Public Relations Department creates beautiful documents on heavy paper, filled with color photos of the company in action. The purpose is to build an image of the company as *"dynamic and growing with vision."* Communication of actual facts is secondary.

You should first decide on exactly the image you are trying to convey to the particular readers of each selected publication. Write down this image beside each name. As you use the advertising techniques listed below, always focus on how to best present this image to readers. (For example, if your chosen image is one of power and new market dominance, you may design an ad with a large picture of a roaring lion, and a headline reading, "*There's a New King of This Jungle.*") Image ads should create a clear, clean, simple image in the reader's mind. Never confuse the image by adding in less important ideas. Elvis Presley is not the winner of multiple Grammy Awards, Hollywood

actor, or former father-in-law of Michael Jackson. He is simply “the King of Rock & Roll.” His image is distilled into those six words.

Image-building, and corporate positioning using image, are incredibly important topics which are well worth your while to study. You can visit our website at www.rossipartners.com for more ideas, advice, books and links to other helpful sites.

STEP 7) HOW? How can you create A strong, simple approach for your ad? Famous Madison Avenue adman Leo Burnett once said, "*There is an inherent drama in every product. Our Number One job is to dig for it and capitalize on it.*" Re-read that last sentence. "Drama" is in the eye of the beholder, the potential buyer. Good drama, by definition, stimulates and captivates the audience. It might be found in a major feature of the product, or a secondary feature which creates a dramatic impact on certain buyers. (The major feature of pagers is their communication ability. But some brands are popular with kids because of a secondary feature, their neon colors.)

The buying situation can also create drama if it generates some strong feelings in the buyer. For example, remember the first present you picked out for your spouse? It was so important that it be “just right” that the drama was in how to select. The store that recognized your frustration and fear, and advertised it could help, would receive your gratitude and business.

Here’s one exercise to help you find your product’s drama: Ask yourself this question, “If you were standing before a firing squad comprised of your customers, smoking your final cigarette, when a colonel says to you, ‘convince my troops they should buy your product and I’ll let you go,’ what would be the first words out of your mouth? What story would you tell, what image would you create in their minds, what desire would you promise to satisfy?” Do this role-playing and your mind will frantically search for something that will capture the imagination.

Searching for the “inherent drama” led to one of the greatest TV ads of all time. A Coca Cola spot in the early ‘70's showed dozens of young people from all over the world standing on a grassy mountain top, holding bottles of Coke and singing “*I want to buy the world a Coke, and keep it company.”* The commercial identified a secondary feature of Coke which “clicked” with all viewers -- sharing a Coke brings people together.

Often you’ll find your drama in an interaction between your buyer and other people, with your product acting as a catalyst or a facilitator. Use it. McDonald’s and Kodak have built their empire on such ads. Coke’s mountaintop spot is still one of the best remembered and most loved ads of all time, which translated into sales and image-building for the company. Remember, people don’t want to stop and read your ad. A strong, simple approach -- comprised of your headline, picture, body copy, and layout -- can reach out, grab the reader by the eyeballs, and make them want to read your message.

Try this experiment. Get a mass audience magazine, and turn through it like you would at a doctor's office, just glancing at the contents. Your eyes don't give equal time to each page, do they? Most pages get just a flicker of attention. Some pages will

warrant a little more attention, but not much. And a few will get some significant attention. Notice where your attention generally is focused -- the top of the page more than the bottom, color more than black-and-white, people more than objects, the front of the publication more than the back pages, etc.

Now ask some friends to do the same thing with the same magazine, but don’t explain why. Each time, sit where you can see both the person’s eyes and the pages. Watch how he/she quickly turns the pages, stopping abruptly to look at some ad or article, but brushing off nearly all of the others. Can you tell what the ads he/she looks at have in common? When the exercise is completed, explain the reason for it. Then ask the person to go back through the magazine, stopping at each ad that previously grabbed their attention, and explain what it was about the ad which stopped them, what they found interesting or stimulating, what created an emotional reaction in them. Pay special attention to those ads which the person actually read. Those are usually the ads which presented the product’s “drama” well, used a strong approach, and did the best job of promising to satisfy some of the person’s motivations. Study those ads for ideas you can use.

Michelangelo said that inside every piece of marble is a hidden figure struggling to get out; and that the sculptor’s job is to help it. You are looking for the hidden features inside your product which will captivate each specific target audience. Invariably, an ad which is designed in that way is strong, and simple.

Of course, all this planning is useless if they don’t stop at your ad. How to grab their eyeballs is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Three:

HOW TO USE PICTURES TO ATTRACT ATTENTION AND INFLUENCE READERS.

A print ad, flyer or brochure has three different components: The headline, the picture(s), and the body copy. Together they make up the layout, or design, of the piece. Some pieces use drawings instead of pictures, or omit them altogether. Often that is a mistake, because visuals can dramatically increase the reader’s attention, interest and understanding of your message. In this chapter, we’ll focus what to look for in selecting a picture for your ad. The following chapters will then take up headlines and body copy.

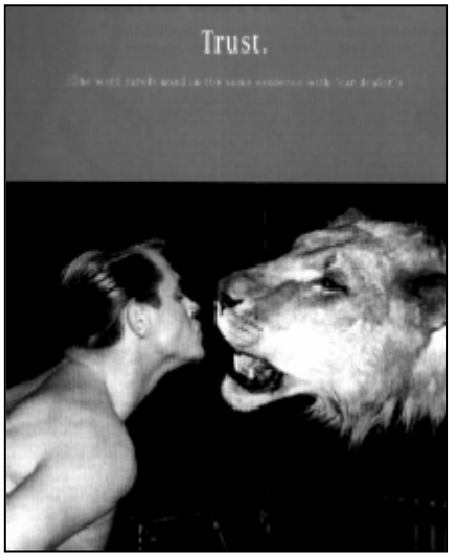
Humans are visual animals. Our vision is the sense we rely on most. This is no accident, but has developed over tens of thousands of generations. Our eyes are attracted to pictures far more than to words, so we will usually look at the picture in an ad before we read the copy. When we scan a newspaper, we look at all the pictures, but not all of the headlines. Advertising which takes advantage of this natural tendency in humans has an advantage of advertising which doesn’t consider it.

The primary picture in an ad has two major jobs: First, to attract and hold the reader’s attention long enough to direct his eyes to the headline. Second, to support and add meaning to the headline and product message. Some ad pictures do one or the other, and some do neither. The ideal picture does both.

Many different types of pictures attract attention. Some are almost sure-fire over all age groups -- babies, puppies and kittens. Others are more attuned to certain demographic groups, like movie stars or sports figures. Generally, women look at pictures of weddings longer than men do, and men look at pictures of cars longer than women do. Selecting the right type of picture can have a huge impact on readership.

The successful advertising designer uses this knowledge to lure the reader into an ad, by playing off the types of pictures which are most arresting to readers. The following techniques for selecting pictures are founded on the results of psychological and advertising research, practical experience and the physiology of human vision. They will help you select visual elements to attract the reader’s attention and support the headline.

1) **Use startling pictures.** A picture with a startling image will attract a lot of attention. A picture of a cow in a tree is an example. Coupled it with a headline like, *"You never know where an ill wind will blow,"* and you've got the structure of an ad which will lead readers right into your body copy.



One of the hallmarks of a startling picture is that it contains familiar objects in unfamiliar relationships. A cow in a tree, a cat riding on a dog's back, a man going to work without pants, a broom straw stuck through a telephone pole, a giant and a midget standing by each other, or a man kissing a lion are all examples of startling photos.

Psychology Today, which is very good at such pictures, once ran an article about keeping secrets under a close-up picture of a woman with a zipper shutting her mouth. A car company promoted its product by showing a businessman driving to work in his small son’s pedal car. A kiddie car in real traffic was a startling contrast.

For your startling picture, think of several ideas which involve or relate to your product. Make sure they are immediately startling, not pictures which readers must look at for a while to understand. For example, if you sell veterinarian supplies, your ad could feature a cat wearing a small white lab coat and a stethoscope. An ad for American Leak Detection franchises showed a hundred people in work clothes standing waist deep in a lake.

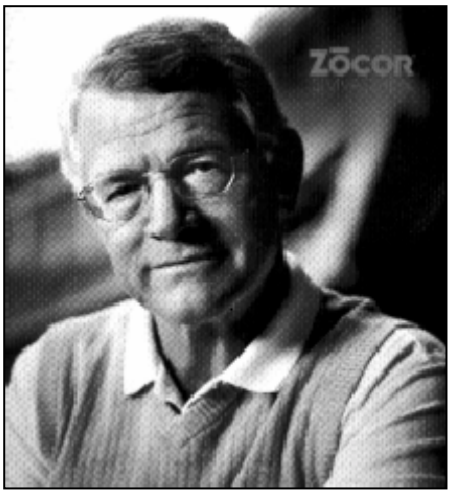
Another sort of startling picture is one which is surprises us because it seems outside the realm of our daily experience. The picture at the right is a good example. You don’t see a wooden face like this every day. If you suddenly found it staring out at you from a magazine ad, chances are you’d stop to see what on earth it was, and why it was staring at you. It should, of course, have some relationship to the product, but it accomplished its primary mission -- to stop you and get you to investigate.

If you’re stuck or unhappy with your creations, go to the library and thumb through a dozen magazines, looking at the ads. Almost certainly some of them will spark a great idea for you. After you’ve got several ideas, show them to friends and ask, “*Which of these pictures would make you want to know more?”* Remember that your picture should have some relation to your message and your headline. If you present readers with a picture of a sexy blond, then try to sell them toilet paper, or show them a photo of a tree turned upside down, then tell them about your new frozen french fries, they will be confused (*“What the heck does a ripped up tree have to do with french fries, Ethel? I can’t figure it out.*”), and they’ll feel a little like you conned them with the picture just to get their attention. Always treat the reader like you would your mother or your best friend.

2) **Use people**. People love to look at other people. The people in your photo should be doing something interesting or puzzling or fun, rather than just standing around like they’re waiting for a bus. Think of your own family photos. The ones in which people are doing something are a lot more interesting than the ones in which Uncle Buck and

Aunt Bambi are just waving at the camera. People in action are just more interesting to look at.

General crowd shots without a clear focus don't often work. They don’t offer the eye an easy way to get in and get out of the photo, and often they don’t offer any arresting subject for the eye to focus on. For example, take a high-angle shot of a crowd running. The photo alone doesn’t tell the reader if the crowd is running from a madman or toward Ed McMahon. It doesn’t offer any humanity to the reader, just a lot of small blobs of color. Of course, a caption will help a great deal, but if your picture requires a caption, it is not as powerful as it might have been. To make a crowd photo more captivating, offer the eye a human focus that commands attention. For example, if we see a wide shot of people running, while in the foreground a small girl looking at the camera cries in terror, then you’ve got a picture that will grab the reader.



Readers like to look at people. They like it more if the people are doing something interesting, or experiencing an emotion they understand and can relate to. And they like it best if they see some emotion they can relate to on the faces of those people -- love, fear, anger, joy, passion, something that reaches out from the two dimensional page and says to the reader, *‘I’m human, too, just like you*.” That’s one of the most powerful and effective ways of connecting with your readers, and creating interest in your message. (“*That poor little girl looks terrified**,** and she’s going to get trampled to death. Why is she in that crowd?*” Or, *“They look so happy! It reminds me of my wedding day!”*)

Closeups work. It is hard to avoid looking at the photo of a person staring at you. Think of the photos you’ve seen for eye make-up or contact lenses or hair products. Many of them feature just a beautiful woman’s face, her big, wide-open eyes staring right at you. Eyes are the first stopper in such a photo. They don’t have to be beautiful, but they must have some special characteristic that sets them apart. Beauty is just one example. The eyes of the Bosnian refugees in the photo have a special haunted quality. The eyes of some killers actually appear to be dead. Whatever the quality, it must leap out at the reader, causing him/her to halt, to exclaim, and stare, and then to read the ad. Good eyes can do that for you. Ordinary eyes can’t. Think of the eyes of Marilyn Monroe or Omar Sharif, eyes that almost talk to you. That’s what you’re after for a close-up photo in your ad. Again, the eyes are a way of trying to create a connection with the reader by making the image in the photo seem more like a live person rather than two dimensional colored ink in the shape of a person.

People photos can also attract attention by showing the them doing something odd or startling, such as a man staring at you with two pencils sticking up his nose, or wearing orange lipstick and rouge. Of course, you must have a reason for the contents of

the photo you choose. For example, the nose-pencil example could be accompanied by a headline reading, "*Got That Stuffy Feeling*?" followed by body copy for a nasal decongestant.

People don't have to be handsome or beautiful, but they should have interesting faces, and they should be photographed well. Photos which bring out the character and years of experience in a person's face are usually captivating. Look at the photos of the Depression in James Agee's book, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. The character and suffering written on those faces grabs you and won't let go. Somehow the pain, fear, pride and hopelessness those people felt comes radiating out of the their photos and straight into the mind of the reader. And if under the photo of that Dust Bowl farmer’s wife in her faded dress the ad’s headline read, “*When we was in trouble, only one store ever helped us out. Walgreens*.”, then you’ve got the start of a memorable, image-building ad.

You must always be careful not to allow the picture to dominate the ad so that the reader just stares, but doesn’t read any farther. The best photos can stand alone, but encourage the reader to look farther (to the headline) to gain even more enjoyment or a deeper understanding of the photo. For example, an Elizabeth Arden ad shows a beautiful woman staring out at the reader, with a white patch on her nose. The woman’s face attracts attention, and raises a question in the reader’s mind, “*What the heck is that*?”, so she naturally looks at the headline for an explanation: “*The Quick Fix for Pores.”*

3) Use Babies. As mentioned above, the subjects which attract the most attention are babies and baby animals. Studies show photos of babies are a particularly powerful attractor for women. Baby animals at play are also strong attractors for children and adults, especially ones which are familiar, such as puppies and kittens. The reaction is even stronger when the babies are doing something “cute,” like playing; cute photos of sleeping babies are grab women’s attention. *“Ahhhh, so sweet*.”

Try to show your product in the picture, since readers may only look at the photo. Try to show the babies interacting with your product, such as swatting it, leaning on it, holding it, etc. **Be Very Careful:** If your product is dangerous to babies or baby animals, DO NOT SHOW IT in the picture. Viewers see the babies in the ad as living beings in the “world” portrayed in the photo. If you show a baby crawling next to a bleach bottle, for example, readers (especially women) will worry that the baby is in danger, and they will blame your product for it! *(“For Heaven sakes, get that baby away from that bleach!!”*) Or another example: You wouldn’t show kittens playing with a toaster -- readers would worry they could get

shocked. Remember, when you create a “world” in your photo that appears normal (not sci-fi or fantasy), readers will accept it as a real situation and judge it accordingly.

4) Use humorous images. Photos which are immediately funny can be attractive. Baby animals at play have great potential for providing such scenes. So do photos which look at a common object in a funny, novel way, such as a little boy on his knees trying to push a bowling ball down the alley, or this woman sticking her tongue out. Again, be sure that the picture is generally regarded as funny by most people you show it to. Don't rely on your own sense of humor to determine if a picture is funny. One barbershop owner thought a picture of him tossing wads of hair in the air was hilarious -- but no one else did. An Internet company used a TV ad showing a high school band being mauled by a pack of ravenous wolves, playing it for laughs.

Whatever humorous picture you select, remember that foremost it must lead the reader into the ad to find out more -- otherwise you’ve just been entertaining.

5) Use an exotic image. People love to see images of places they’ve only read about in books, places that look fascinating, strange and wonderful. Show them a picture of such a place, and they’ll stop to look. Ads in travel magazines often use these types of pictures to lure readers to their travel agents. This ad for Capri cigarettes takes another, more subtle, approach by associating the exotic feel of the Isle of Capri with their product. The subconscious message is that those who smoke Capri cigarettes are also exotic and exciting (just as the Marlboro message is that “real men” smoke Marlboros.) If you use this idea, be sure your photo truly looks exotic and different; but don’t make readers work to decipher what you are showing them!

6) **Use costumes**. People dressed in costumes are often more interesting to the glancing eye, especially if the picture is novel, startling or humorous. A man wearing a powdered wig and frock coat, or a Viking helmet, or a Royal Canadian Mounties uniform will attract at least some glancing attention. Remember, the first goal of any ad is to make the reader stop by gaining at least a second or two of his/her attention.

In part a costume attracts the eye because we don't expect to see it, and in part because such a costume holds out the possibility of some fun or an interesting story. Again, **the reader is unconsciously seeking some value in exchange for giving up the time to consider your ad, even if he doesn’t like your product**. If you can quickly suggest that at least a tiny bit of value is to be had by reading on, there’s a good chance he will read on.

Of course, you can combine two pictorial techniques to increase the impact. For example, our Mountie with a kitten on his shoulder, a Viking using a cell phone, or the man in the frock coat hailing a cab. All these pictures are visually stronger for the combination of two techniques -- using costumes, and the incongruity of the costume with another element of the picture. If you’re clever enough to find interesting, discordant elements that together are also humorous, you’ve hit a “trifecta.” Again, all elements of the photo must fit with the body copy and the product. Otherwise, it is dishonest attraction, and your reader will dislike you for it, because you've fooled them.

7) **Use sexy shots**. In today’s society, sex and money are probably the two topics best able to seduce the average person. Of the Top 100 Web sites, over 40 are sex-related. Sex is the base for dozens of popular TV shows, and the staple topic for some of the most successful magazines targeted to men and women. In short, sex DOES sell. It’s great at selling itself, but it might not be so great at selling your product unless you make garter belts.

The key to using sex in an ad is to be **suggestive, but not explicit**. Sex is really a **dangerous** technique, because if it is not done with taste, care, and sometimes even tongue-in-cheek humor, it will offend as many people as it attracts. You don't need that, because all those people could be your customers. It’s like fooling with a loaded gun. If you aren’t careful and know how to handle it, you’re probably better off to just leave it alone.

For example, using another medium, consider the Howard Stern Show on TV. His constant focus on sex in a crude, sophomoric manner repels far more people than it attracts. Stern’s particular set of advertisers don’t mind, but most advertisers would never offend ten potential customers in order to get one to buy. Unless your primary target audience are high school and college age boys, don’t be crude.

Mild to moderately sexy photos in ads are turn-ons for both men and women. Research shows, however, that men are more aroused by visual depictions of sexy women (witness the success of Playboy and Penthouse magazines, and the popularity of the Victoria’s Secret catalogs.) Women are more aroused by pictures (and the mental fantasy it creates) of a sexy man with a woman in a romantic setting (witness the enormous success of Romance Novels, which are often purchased -- according to publishers -- based on the picture on the cover, not the plot line. In fact, male model Fabio’s moment of fame was a direct result of his enormous popularity with women from his covers for those romance novels.)

Thus, if your targeted group is female, and you choose to use a sexy approach to grab their attention, your ad should feature a sexy man and an attractive woman in a romantic setting, with the male clothed or partially clothed. If your targeted group is male, a photo of a sexy woman in a short skirt and tight halter top will do the trick nicely. **One effective way to use sex is to combine it with humor. This helps to reduce the overt sexual nature of the photo. While stockholders may not have thought this ad photo was in the best taste, it definitely stopped the casual reader.**

Again, if the person or situation is overwhelmingly sexy, the reader’s fantasy will capture the moment -- and your product will never be remembered. In fact, unless you’re promising a date with the model, they probably won’t even read your ad. But they may tear out the picture! In using sex in ads, moderation and good taste is the key to success.

8) Place a common object in an uncommon position. We expect to see people and things in a certain way, like people with their heads above their feet, or signs right side up. When we don't, it grabs our attention. For example, one laundry chain has always displayed its “Laundry” signs upside down to catch attention. If you see a photo of a television on its side, it will catch your attention. So will a man turning a cartwheel, a woman bent over the back of a chair, a boy hanging by his legs from a tree limb, and a dog on his back with all four legs in the air; all are examples of this technique.

Again, the picture must be relevant to the ad’s message, otherwise you’ve accomplished nothing. It’s helpful if the position actually has something to do with the product, but it isn’t totally necessary. A model bent backwards over a chair or tilted at an angle, for example, is sometimes seen in high fashion magazine layouts, even though the model’s position has nothing to do with the dress she is wearing. It is still an eye-catching picture.

9) **Place a common object in an uncommon setting**. A little girl standing on a playground may not be eye-catching, but a little girl in her play clothes standing on an automobile assembly line, in an African village, or on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange will grab viewers' attention. A car parked on the street is boring, but the same car parked in a church isn’t. We expect people and things to be found in a range of settings which are common for them, such as a playground or school for the little girl. When the setting is far outside the normal range of what we expect, the picture doesn't make immediate sense, so we stop to investigate because it has aroused our curiosity.

Most people are curious. They also want what Gestalt psychologists used to call “closure,” that is, for things to fit together into a recognizable pattern, or to make sense. (A famous Gestalt experiment showed people a series of regularly spaced dots creating a

nearly complete circle; but subjects remembered it as a complete circle, adding the phantom dots in their memory to achieve the mental closure of a complete figure.)

We like to understand what we see, what we hear. If we hear a crash or a siren outside, we look out the window. If we hear a news story of a little girl trapped inside an 8" drainage pipe, we wrack our brains to understand how she could have gotten inside it. If we see a ballet dancer leaping toward us on the sidewalk, we try to figure out what logical set of events could have placed her there. We all have a concept of what is logical, common, ordinary, and understandable in our world. When something -- an event, a strange sound, a picture, a person -- appears to be outside those boundaries, we want to understand how or what has happened. We want the mental comfort of closure. Understanding helps our world to make sense again, and helps us to feel secure in it.

One other point to notice, the mental processing necessary to judge a picture “normal” or “uncommon” happens very quickly, in far less than a half-second! The human brain can process pictures in as little as a hundredth of a second -- and recognize them weeks later! We all have a powerful capacity to remember images. Far better than our capacity to remember words. Pictures can be tremendously useful in helping your readers to remember your message -- if you link the picture and message tightly together.

Try This: Make a list of the places where your product may be used. Then select a few where it would visually seem terribly out of place. (Toothpaste at a hockey game, a laptop computer at a church service, shorts at a wedding, etc.) Don’t write down places where your product isn’t usually seen, but would not be out of place. For example, an electric razor is usually used in the bathroom, but it isn’t out of place in the car. Finally, from your list of possible locations, select the place that meets these three criteria: (a) a photo of your product there will seem very incongruous; (b) the location will not offend your readers; and © the location will have some relevance to the message and be familiar to your readers.

For example, if you make a Backflow Prevention device that stops polluted water from entering fresh water pipes, your customers range from small businesses to schools and other public buildings. Showing these big, U-shaped pipes outside any building wouldn’t look odd, only boring. But the same pipes inside a gift shop, a boutique, a restaurant or a church will look odd. Showing a picture of these big, iron pipes in front of a church alter would offend many readers. And most of your business comes from small retailers.

So you show a picture of your big, gray pipes in a boutique, surrounded by lace wedding dresses, white veils and exotic flowered hats. The contrasts and incongruous setting will stop most readers, if only to answer the question, “What are those ugly pipes doing in a bridal shop?” They will naturally look at the headline below the photo: “*Your Customers Should Be Throwing Rice, Not Throwing Up.”* Together the photo and headline lead readers to explore the ad further.

10) **Place a person in a dangerous situation**. Take a pretty young woman and photograph her in the middle of a busy street, leaning over a high cliff, or among a maze of large spider webs and you've created a situation which viewers will instantaneously recognize as dangerous. That sets off automatic alarms in their minds and focuses their attention on the event. Even though it is just a photo, our instinct for danger causes our body to respond in this way. (Most people can dramatically demonstrate this to themselves by looking at a photo shot looking straight down from the top of the Empire State Building. Our fear of falling is so great that even a photo giving the illusion of our falling sends a jolt through our system.)

It is not easy for our mind to ignore a perceived dangerous situation, in reality, on film, or in a photo. Of course, we don’t respond to the same degree in each instance. But that initial jolt focusing the reader’s attention on a “dangerous” situation is enough to stop them from turning the page. At that point, the remainder of the ad must be effective enough to keep them interested.

Imagine the famous scene in Sylvester Stallone's movie *Cliffhanger* in which he appears to hang by one hand off a rock jutting out from a cliff thousands of feet high. We instinctively recognize that the situation is extremely dangerous, and that recognition focuses all our attention on what happens to him. But if we could see the ground a few feet below him, the scene would not rivet our attention. It is the perceived danger in what COULD happen which grabs us. For that reason, the potential for disaster (a hand gripping the edge of a cliff) is often more powerful than the disaster itself (the climber falling).

You can also use this technique to create a <u>symbolic</u> picture for some fear of your target buyers. Not all fears are easily represented in a photo. The fear of cancer, of making the wrong decision, of loneliness and despair are not easy to convey with impact in a photo, although skilled photographers have done it, such as in the Dust Bowl photos mentioned above. If you don’t have that type of “grab your guts” photo, you can use a photo in which the object shown <u>represents</u> some other object, emotion or idea.

For example, an ad for a new Canon copier system could show a man in a business suit and climbing ropes perched high on a sheer mountain face, leaning back against his rope harness. The headline reads, *“When it’s All On The Line, You Want the*

Best Equipment Available.” By pairing the photo and the headline, readers interpret the danger the man faces as symbolic of the danger he faces in fouling up an important project. Many will also interpret the rope harness to represent good equipment, such as a high quality Canon that you can trust with your life / your job.

This picture of a house being swept away in a “Wizard of Oz” tornado visually emphasizes the insurance company’s theme of being prepared for unexpected disasters.

It is important to note that a certain percentage of readers will simply “not get it.” They will not understand the metaphor, making the abstract associations between the climber’s ropes and the Canon copier. They may look at the picture, and even read the ad, but the symbolism will be lost on them. (See the technique below on Symbolic Photos for more ideas.)

11) Place a person or object in an impossible situation. We all know what the physical laws of nature will allow, and what they won't. We know people can't fly and what goes up must come down. Imagine you sold bowling balls. Now imagine an ad in a bowling magazine in which a famous bowler stands next to a large aquarium. In the water are some brightly colored fish, and a blue bowling ball -- floating on the surface. Since we know bowling balls can't float, the image grabs our attention. Add a headline reading, "*So Light It Floats Off Your Hand*", and you have an ad which grabs attention, ties the picture to the text, makes a promise which satisfies a "want" of many women bowlers (light balls), and takes the reader right into the body copy (the text of the ad) where the manufacturer can "talk" to the reader about the new featherweight ball.

Other examples of Impossible pictures include a man laying upside-down; a dog standing on the surface of a swimming pool; a child walking up a living room wall; and a woman with an umbrella floating in the air (a la Rene Magritte or Mary Poppins). Again, be sure there’s a relationship between what the reader is seeing and your headline and product. For example, if the important feature of the bowling ball ad was something other than its light weight, the entire ad falls apart.

12) **Show something dangerous**. Many years ago a number of studies were done on the people’s instantaneous emotional responses to various types of photographs. For each photo, researchers measured changes in the change in the size of the pupils of the subject’s eyes. This research proved that changes in pupil size relate to a person’s reaction to the photo. (Body language books have used this same idea, suggesting that if a person's pupils get larger when they first look at you, they like you, and vice versa.)

The results showed that when we see things which attract us (pretty girls or handsome men, chocolate deserts, etc.), our pupils often do get bigger. And when we see things which are dangerous or repulsive (close-up photos of a lion, a dead body, busted sacks of garbage), our pupils get smaller. Pictures which create little interest or involvement (trees, rocks, soap, lamps) produce no change in pupil size.

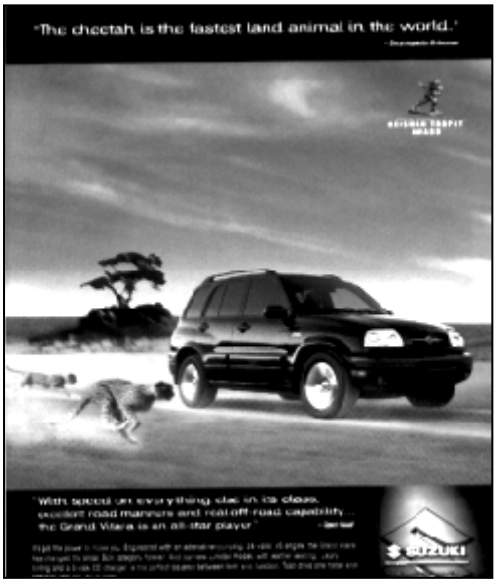
The studies found when women saw pictures of babies or small children, a high proportion of them immediately had dilated pupils. And when both men and women saw a close-up picture of a roaring lion, their pupils shrank. Researchers believe this involuntary reaction is tied to old survival mechanisms developed in our early ancestors.

Advertising agencies and TV producers jumped on these findings as a way of determining exactly what consumers thought about products and actors. Focus groups were monitored as they watched commercials and TV programs, and their pupil reactions were analyzed to see who and what they really liked. As with so many other theories, it didn’t work as well as they hoped -- most people in their “focus groups” didn’t show much change in the size of their pupils, which wasn’t what the ad men and producers wanted to hear.

But the technique is very useful if you simply take its basic finding to heart: people react very quickly, either positively or negatively, to some element(s) in a photo, and neutrally to most things. Pick a photo containing something they will strongly react to, and you will grab their attention.

The fact that subjects were almost universally uninterested in ordinary items, like the products you may sell, suggests that a picture of your product alone will probably not create the strong response or reaction -- one of the key jobs of the ad’s picture -- unless you happen to sell lions or snakes.

Using a picture of a dangerous animal or a perilous situation will grab many viewers' attention. Some examples of such pictures include: a lion roaring at the camera, facing an oncoming train, standing among hundreds of snakes (remember your reaction to the snake scene in *Indiana Jones*?), or falling from a speeding car. Such situations are clearly and immediately recognized as dangerous, and will attract attention.



You can also attract readers’ attention by just suggesting the potential of danger, or the possibility of violence. A photo of a shark’s fin cutting through the water can focus attention because the reader knows what that fin is attached to. In fact, if the reader had some past experience with a shark, or saw the film “Jaws,” the strong emotional memories created by that experience will be reactivated at the first sight of a shark’s fin -- riveting the reader’s attention on your ad.

Some other ways to suggest danger are less intense, but still effective. For example, a banana peel laying near the edge of a skyscraper’s roof or an open manhole, a baby crawling toward a swimming pool, a lit cigarette laying on a bedspread next to a sleeping man, or a young boy starting to poke into an electrical outlet with a screwdriver. In all these photos, our minds “take the next step” in the situation, visualizing what dangers could occur. This can be very useful for

the advertiser. Studies show that people who become involved with ads remember them far longer than those who don’t.

For example, if you sell luggage, you could show a picture of your luggage -- which would produce little interest in the reader. Or you could put your luggage squarely in the foreground of the picture, on a railroad track, with a big train rushing towards it (and the reader). The photo creates a mild sense of danger and grabs the reader’s attention. It also raises an immediate question in the reader’s mind, “*What’s going to be left of that suitcase after the train hits it?”* You have created involvement, raised a question which will pull the reader into your ad, and set up your ad’s sales pitch -- “*If a speeding train can’t destroy a new American Tourister suitcase -- what chance does an airport baggage handler have?*”

13) **Show the product in use**. People would prefer to see a product in action, rather than at rest. A car going along a mountain highway, a burger being eaten, a woman applying perfume are all examples of this technique. Most companies like to see their product in the photo, but It isn’t often that a product alone in a photo can grab the reader. Some products that can grab their target audience without help would likely include a new Corvette, a gun, exotic jewelry, and a new movie photo, among others.

If you can create a picture featuring the product that will attract attention (like the luggage ad above), then do it. Remember, however, while the product may be the “star” of the photo, it is the other elements of the photo -- separately or in conjunction with the product -- which will probably attract the reader’s attention.

There are several effective ways to show a product in use which will interest the reader. For example, you might show the product being used in an odd location (such as a man shaving in the desert), or shot from an odd angle (looking up at a towering file cabinet), being used in an odd way (a monkey knotting a tie), or being used by an odd person (a tattooed biker grooming a cute French poodle). This technique is one best used in conjunction with some other techniques discussed in this book. Simply showing a man shaving will not encourage readers to learn more about your new shaver, unless they are already in the market for one. You’ll need to combine the photo with a headline and body copy which play off the photo, stimulating some key buying motivations of readers, then showing how your razor can satisfy those motivations.

Here’s a nice example. It not only shows the Suzuki being driven in an exotic location, but shows cheetahs running alongside. The headline says *“The Cheetah is the fastest land animal in the world.”* (Yes, the headline could have been a lot better!) But you get the point -- the Suzuki is cheetah-fast.

Don’t settle on the first idea you come up with. Create several ideas and try them out on your friends. See which ones you all like best. Your first effort will seldom be the one you select when you give yourself choices. While you should trust your ideas, don’t be fooled into thinking that what you like is what everyone else will like.

There’s an excellent story illustrating this point:

A teacher asks his marketing class, “Do you like strawberries?”

They answer, “Yes.”
The teacher says, “If you were going fishing, would you use strawberries as bait?”
“Of course not,” they reply.
“Fish don’t like strawberries.” The teacher counters, “But you do.”
“True,” they reply. “But we’re trying to catch fish.”
“Right,” says the teacher. “Always use the bait your target likes, not what you like. Few fish have been caught with strawberries as bait.”

The proper bait will hook your readers into looking at your ad.

Remember this fundamental rule: You can't tell readers your message unless you stop their hand from turning the page, and get their eyes to read your body copy. (It’s amazing how many ads seem to assume that you’ll stop to read everything they present, no matter how boring, poorly written, or badly designed. But in fact, one study found that **ten times more people read advertising headlines than read the body copy.** That tells you one thing -- those headlines and photos were not doing the job of pulling readers all the way into the ads.

There is one exception to this rule: Sometimes a product is so well known that the picture (or the picture and headline) can carry the basic message just fine by themselves. A photo of a laughing family eating burgers under the McDonald's golden arches is an example. So is a teen celebrity drinking a Pepsi. The picture conveys the image and the idea -- families have fun eating at McDonald's; Pepsi is the choice of teen celebrities. The ads don’t need to say anything else to drive home the message -- have fun with your family by eating at McDonalds; be like Mike by drinking Pepsi.

14) Use other objects or people to enhance your product’s image. Many times one product will have more allure when paired with another product than it does alone. For example, a Coke often looks more appetizing when shown with a slice of pizza (the food most often eaten with a Coke); jewelry often looks more stunning when seen on a woman in a fabulous dress -- and both look more appealing when the woman is well-known and/or beautiful. In this ad, for example, the purse, top, pants and shell are all from different designers, but together on a pretty model they appear more attractive than by themselves on a hanger.

This effect is an example of *gestalt* psychology mentioned above, whose best known tenet is that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” This concept should not be taken as a general planning principle without understanding more about the ides of this German school of psychology. But in

the case of the jewelry and dress, the overall impact of jewelry + dress + lovely woman is greater than their impact alone. It's like finding a money changing machine in which 2 + 2 = 5. Each product's image is enhanced not only by the image of the other product, but by the overall image they create.

Try This: Ask yourself if any other product would fit harmoniously into your advertising. Sometimes there is an especially goo technique if you are selling a service that will be enhanced by a product, or a product that will be enhanced by a service. For example, if you're in real estate, your picture might show a Century 21 Real Estate broker holding the passenger door of a new Mercedes for a buyer. Tie the photo with a headline like, *"When you go with Century 21, you travel with the best*." The Mercedes in the shot provides the car company with co-branded advertising, enhances the image of Century 21 ("*Wow, Marge, those Century 21 guys must be pretty good if they're driving around in Mercedes!*"), and suggests to buyers that they will be treated in luxurious fashion by a Century 21 broker.

If you find such a product, try it out privately by taking a photo of your product alone, and then with the other product, arranged stylishly together. If you and others believe the pairing enhances your product's image, then seek out company that sells those products, and ask if they would like to do some co-op advertising. If they agree, you can effectively double your advertising reach at no additional cost to you or your partner, and probably increase the sales of both companies. By showing the phone number and address of both businesses, customers can quickly check out either or both products directly. You could both go the next step and have a sample of the advertising partner's products in the store, or give out literature about the product. Don't forget about trying this co-branding arrangement on the Web, too.

15) Use pictures that create a mental contrast with the headline. The mind usually anticipates new input -- what's coming next. It's a survival mechanism, like the old aphorism, "*Forewarned is forearmed*.". A good example of this when we receive a letter from our bank or the IRS. As we open it, we are imagining what the letter will say. We do this all day long, with letters, phone calls, meetings, trips to see the boss, etc. Another reason for this phenomenon is that the mind processes information far faster than it encodes data from the outside world. So, as the speedy mental processors are waiting new data, they are filling the time by anticipating what is coming.

The mind works in just the same way with advertisements. After the reader’s mind has processed your ad’s picture, it anticipates the general idea of the headline before actually reading it. (It usually goes in this order, whether the headline is above or below the picture, because our eyes are naturally drawn first to visuals. In fact, headlines above pictures can often be overlooked, because our eyes naturally travel down a page.)

Here’s an example of the technique. An ad done by Mobil Oil shows an oil supertanker, but the headline reads, “Two of the Safest Ships Ever Built.” The reader sees one ship, so he will naturally wonder, “Where’s the other ship?” That question is enough to get many people to read the body copy -- where the advertiser’s message is kept. The picture and headline did their job, they moved the reader’s eyes down into the message.

When a headline isn’t quite what the reader’s mind has anticipated, it is surprised. When the mind is surprised, it focuses attention on the thing which surprised it (obviously another ancient survival mechanism.) And the cursory attention given the ad is suddenly increased. Of course, focused attention is a key step in getting the reader to look at your message. One national non-profit used the technique exquisitely in an ad showing a garbage-strewn roadway over the headline “*America the Beautiful*.”

The contrast between the idea expressed in the headline and the images in the photo forced the reader to focus attention on the ad, to try and understand how the picture and the headline fit together. While the mind is deciding the headline is satirical, it is also encoding the ad’s message, making it more likely that the reader will remember message.

16) **Make the object big**. A close-up photo can often grab attention, especially if it is of a familiar object. Small or even tiny objects seem to work especially well. A tight close-up of an apple or a grape, the veins in a leaf, or a caterpillar are all good examples. You can even go microscopic. A enlarged view of a fly's eye is amazing to see, as is the mouth of a praying mantis or the surface of a piece of paper. Often readers will stop to study such a picture because it is not readily apparent what it is. Of course, getting readers to “stop and study” is an important part of what an ad photo is suppose to do.

Here’s a good example of tying a close-up photo to a headline and body copy: The ad’s photo is an extreme close-up of a thick steel bolt “wearing” a tiny life jacket. Just below it is the headline "*Life Saver*." The body copy explains how this high quality bolt, and 127 just like it, make the new Lincoln safer for your family. The ad uses several techniques, as you surely recognized. It has an enormous picture of a lowly bolt; it uses the incongruity of a bolt wearing a tiny life jacket; and the headline is creates a mental contrast with the picture, but ties nicely into it as the reader quickly understands its meaning.

This is not a magic tip. Not every object, or even tiny object, will work. Most will just receive a passing glance as the reader turns the page. Look for photos which are amazing, bizarre, startling, or not readily recognizable. Show several choices to friends. You want a photo which has two qualities: (a) it will make the reader stop and study the photo; and (b) it works well with the headline to convey a message, and leads the reader into the body copy.

17) **Make the face big**. One type of photo which will stop most readers, at least momentarily, is a close-up of a person’s face, especially if that face is looking squarely at the reader. Even photos which only show a portion of a person’s face are effective, especially if they include the eyes. It is one of the few universal traits of humans that we want to look at the eyes of others. When someone’s eyes are looking at us, we have a difficult time not looking back, even for a moment. Eye to eye contact is somehow momentarily binding, even if one of the parties is just a photo.

Some faces are more captivating than others. Of course, faces of celebrities are on that list. Some others include beautiful women; very handsome men; disfigured or deformed faces; faces with an oddity such as a very prominent nose or large ears or cross eyes; faces with ‘character’ in which you can almost see the hard life that etched the lines; faces that are laughing, crying, or in pain; faces filled with sexual passion or desire; faces with large eyes staring at the reader, especially if the pupils are dilated (blue eyes, particularly in lighter shades, are magnetizing in color photos); exhausted faces, such as seen after a marathon; faces that are winking; faces that are dead; and faces that are in terror of their lives.

Faces can also attract additional attention by showing a protruding tongue. The tongue itself will convey a message, as well as attracting attention. For example, a sexy woman with a slightly extended tip of her tongue can be riveting for men; a kid sticking his tongue out; a tongue licking the lips is strongly associated with anticipating good food; a slightly protruding tongue, often to the side, is associated with extreme concentration (look at many of Michael Jordan’s action photos.)

The shape and size of the eyes are a major consideration in sending the proper message to a reader. We associate an extreme wide-eyed look with surprise or fear; narrowed eyes with anger and distrust; a moderate wide-eyed look with interest; partially closed “bedroom eyes” with passion; and closed eyes with sleep, death, or total lack of interest.

Eyebrows can also help a face to grab attention. We use our eyebrows to convey several non-verbal ideas. Raised eyebrows can suggest doubt; eyebrows down in a frown signal displeasure; raised eyebrows suggest interest and attention; and one raised eyebrow means the person is a fan of Star Trek’s Mr. Spock.

The mouth is a strong element in most facial photos. It is used to express many emotions which we may want our photo to convey. Tight lips signal anger, an open mouth is associated with surprise, lips drawn back suggest hostility and eminent violence. And our smiles convey a range of emotions, from frigid acknowledgment to joy.

When you use a close-up of a face as your photo, it is important that you carefully look at each element in the face, including its overall shape and the way in which each element of the face fits together, to determine if it is sending the proper message. For example, if you are selling cars and want the female model’s picture to express to readers that “McCoy’s is having a truly amazing new car sale,” then you probably want the face to show an open mouth, not a smile, and wide open eyes, not half-closed “bedroom eyes.”

Try This: Make sure you can somehow relate your product to the expression or type of face in the picture. Cosmetics ads use this technique a lot, as do contact lens product ads. Asian airlines often use close-ups of their flight attendants to give travel with them a human, caring image, while emphasizing the exotic places they will fly you to. If you’re creative, you can find others. I’m looking at one gruesome example now -- a human head, eyes open, resting on a golden platter. The headline reads, “*Don’t Hand Them Your Head on a Platter!*” The ad urges readers to buy a certain computer networking system to avoid the wrath of management.

18) **Show them their desires.** We all need and want things, and we all fear certain outcomes. But in our heart of hearts, **we daydream about our desires.** The movie star we want to kiss, the job that would make our career fly, the little house on a quiet beach -- the images are so strong some times you can almost touch them. Such images of our daydreams are powerful motivators.

Daydreams come in many types and sizes. Many of our desires are small ones -- a husband who brings home roses or wants to cuddle, a son who offers a compliment on the cookies you baked, a stranger who looks at your twice and smiles, even making all the light on the way to work, or finding a parking place near the door -- they are also daydreams. Simple products which make us feel good are often desires -- like candy. Young & Rubicam once did an ad like this for Life Savers. The full page, full color ad shows rows and rows of brightly colored Life Saver candies. The headline simply said, *“Please Do Not Lick This Page*!”

Such ads may not stimulate us to think about our heart-pounding desires, but they can be very successful because readers recognize that they can actually satisfy these motivations (unlike the date with the movie star and winning millions, which, we know deep in our heart, really only happens to other people.)

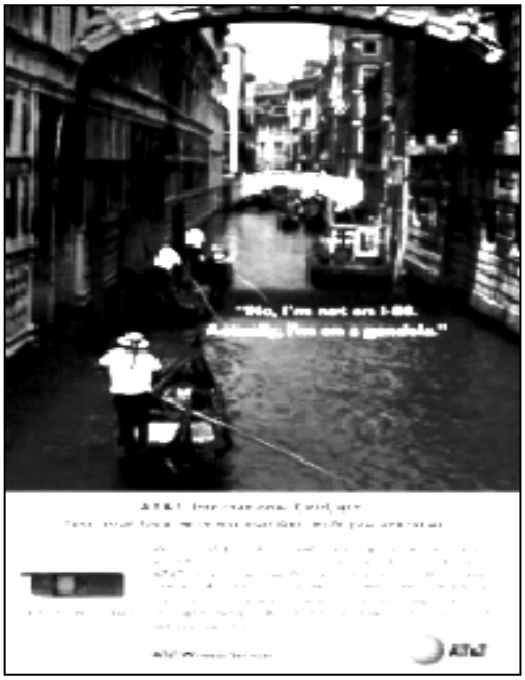
At the other end of the size spectrum are the Big Dream daydreams. Lottery ads are a good example of selling pure dreams. The lottery transaction itself provides

nothing we need or want (we just buy tickets and throw them away), nor does it reduce any fears. It just stimulates our desire for wealth, and what that wealth could buy, with thoughts of "*What if* . . .?”

One typical ad showed a man with a pool toy sitting in a large stone fountain. Stretching out behind him is a quarter mile of green grass leading to a British country mansion. The headline is, "*Its gonna happen to someone. Why not you*?" A similar headline could read, "*Buy a ticket to the good life*." Or, “*Your heart’s desire is just a lucky ticket away.”* The mansion in this ad is just a symbol of the "wealth beyond measure" that could be won. The symbol for wealth in your picture will stimulate readers to think what they would do, to put themselves in a picture of their own choosing. In real life, most people wouldn’t really want an English castle. It is just a symbol, an example, of what all that money could buy.

The key in appealing to your reader’s desires is to show them what they desire, or a symbol of it. The steps in the process required to fulfill the daydream are not important in the photo, just the dream itself. For example, we don’t need to see the woman purchasing a lottery ticket, only the new car she bought with her winnings.

For any sort of product that lends itself to this technique, the approach is the same -- show an example of wealth / romance / security / or whatever will stimulate the readers’ daydreams the best. Then follow it with a headline suggesting that the reader’s dream could come true, if only .... *(“Yes, yes, you’re telling me I can have it all, but you’re not telling me how!”*) Then clearly explain the few simple steps they must take to, perhaps, make that dream live. Finally, give them a sense of urgency about acting on the impulse, before “time slips away.” It’s that simple. Stimulate desire. Hold out the promise of satisfaction. Tell them what to do. Then set a quick timeframe to respond before the offer ends. For many young, unmarried men and women in their 20's looking for love, this formula will sound very familiar.



Here’s another example. People hate their daily “behind the desk from 9 to 5" job, bookended with frustrating commutes to home. Now the person in this AT&T ad is doing just what they dream about -- doing business while relaxing in an exotic, romantic setting, in this case Venice. In this ad the picture and headline (*“No, I’m not on I-10. Actually I’m in a gondola.”*) reinforce each other and the overall message -- if you had an AT&T cell phone, this might be you!

Let’s look at a more common dream used in ads for Dow’s *Fantastik* cleaner -- a product you normally don’t think of as being a good candidate for the “daydream” approach. But look....

One of the daydreams many women have is to receive praise from her friends and husband -- for just about anything, including a clean kitchen. Of course, she may have a better chance at winning the lottery, but the daydream is there. Praise is a strong motivator; it is one of the very first motivators we were ever exposed to as babies, and one which played a major role in our social and educational development. *“What a good boy! Look, Harry, she got straight A’s again! What a smart girl!”*

Many cleaning products have played on this desire. Here’s one way: The photo in the Fantastik ad could show the woman and a friend admiring her kitchen, where the tile and cabinets gleam and the sunlight makes everything sparkle. Over in the corner on a shelf is the bottle of Fantastik. The headline in a cartoon balloon over the friend’s head reads, "*Oh, Beth! I wish my kitchen looked half this good!*" Other possible headlines include: "*Your kitchen looks brand new*," Or, "*It's gorgeous! What's Your Secret?*" etc. Of course, Beth is just smiling, soaking up the praise. (It may sound hokey, but it isn’t your daydream that’s being stimulated.)

Finally, be sure to look at perfume ads for the very best examples of the daydream technique. These ad photos nearly all show an attractive woman and a handsome man. Most often they are together in a secluded place, romantically touching. In some, such as the Charlie perfume ads, the woman is striding through a public place toward the handsome man, while all other eyes -- male and female -- are focused on her (giving the reader two daydream stimuli at once -- romance and envy!) All perfume ads are about women’s desires -- the desire for romance, for Mr. Right, for excitement, fun and exotic places; the desire to feel they are more than a towel-folder and toilet scrubber. Even this Ralph Lauren ad for MEN’s cologne is designed the same way. Why? Because most men’s cologne is purchased by women, again hoping to create a romantic fantasy in real life. Notice here that the one having the best time in this ad is the woman.

Study how the perfume ad agencies stimulate these desires with photos and sometimes with headlines suggesting THIS perfume could be the one leading to her daydream man or situation, all without any explicit promises. Often there is no copy ad all except the name of the perfume. (If perfume was sold like most other packaged goods, the ads would tell readers about the conveniently-shaped bottle, the spray head, and how it is value-priced with 20% more

ounces of perfume than its competitors. We don’t see these ads because women don’t buy perfume as a “need” or “want,” but to satisfy a “desire.” Almost every product and service is partially bought to satisfy a desire. If you find it, you can sell a lot more of your own ‘perfume.’

There was a marvelous perfume ad for Calvin Klein’s Eternity which took a slightly different tack. Its creators recognized that for many women, especially those married or older than 29, there is another powerful desire wrapped up with their desire for romance. That desire is fidelity in their mate. When about half of all marriages end in divorce, with often horrible consequences for the woman, the desire to somehow keep her mate faithful is a powerful one.

The black and white photo for Eternity perfume shows a close-up of a man and woman’s head leaning together in bed, sleeping. The woman wears no make-up or jewelry. The man has a beard stubble. This isn’t romance in the conventional sense, but the warm romance that comes from enjoying a comfortable feeling just being together, being yourselves, without pretense. The daydream here isn’t hot romance, but the security of an old romance still strong. In a day when marriage is fragile, this offers a powerful allure to married women. *“Wear Eternity perfume and he’ll continue loving you.”* (You think the name is just a coincidence? Hah!)

By the way, these ads also point up that **it is far better to show the end result** (the mansion, the romance) than the use of the product (buying a ticket, applying perfume). This fact is especially true with cooking products where readers want to see the finished cake, not someone making a cake. Remember, **the success of perfume and lottery ads prove that you can make sales simply by appealing to your buyer's desires, then linking your product or service to their possible fulfillment.** Figure out what desire your product can satisfy, then construct an ad around that idea.

19) **Make it violent**. Most readers will stop at the a picture showing violence or imminent violence. We still remember the famous Vietnam war photo of a Vietnamese general holding a pistol to the head of a captured Viet Cong soldier, Reginald Denney being dragged from his truck and beaten during the LA riots, terrible car crashes, and many others. Violent pictures have a way to sticking in our minds. One of the most influential photos ever taken showed Birmingham police with snarling German Shepherds attacking Black children during a civil rights demonstration. The impact of seeing such violence meted out by segregationists against children was instrumental in changing the perception of Americans about the struggle, and ultimately resulted in major social and legal changes. Never underestimate the power of the perfect picture. The best ones are worth far more than their proverbial “thousand word” value.

Weapons signal violence to readers, especially weapons that have rich emotional associations with violence, like a shotgun or handgun. A doctor's magazine ran an article about taxes and highlighted it on the cover with a close-up photo of a gun, labeled “IRS,” with the tease line "*How to Dodge the IRS Bullet*." Weapons that have little relevance to our society, such as a crossbow or a pike, will not be as effective in grabbing attention.

Close-up shots of professional football, hockey, or basketball players in action also offer other examples of violence. One ad agency ran a print ad for its services which showed a tight close up of one boxer's glove smashing into the face of his opponent. The headline read, "**IMPACT**." (Note here how the large headline in bold, all capital letters fits better with the theme of the photo than one in upper and lower case letters, or some swirly font.)

The aftermath of violence is also captivating. Remember ground-level photos of bombed cities, of firemen searching the ruins of the federal building in Oklahoma City, of Mohammed Ali standing over the crumpled body of Joe Fraser, or the Littleton, Colorado school massacre. Photos showing the results of violence are useful to drive home sales points about *“what could happen.*” For example, an ad showing an automobile wreck with the headline “*$500,000 in bills . . . and no insurance.”*

Try This: Violence is almost always related to a type of “fear” motivator -- fear of a wreck, of being mugged, etc. Unless your photo shows fans beating up a referee, violence will seldom work with “desire” motivators. Ask yourself if a violent act is (or could be) in any way associated with your service, product, or its use (such as auto insurance, medicine, etc.). If not, then ask yourself if a violent picture can symbolically illustrate an idea you want to get across to the reader (such as the “IMPACT” of your service.)

Then look through the many stock photo libraries and free photo sites on the Internet for a shot that works best for you. You could also look in the Yellow Pages for Stock Photo houses. For most themes, you are wiser to pay for a photo composed and shot by a professional, rather than taking a snapshot yourself. Violence photos are tremendously enhanced by the lighting, composition, and angle of the shot. You want your photo to have the greatest visual impact, so don’t skimp on quality -- a poor photo will greatly diminish the ad and its results.

Finally, look for ways to let your headline help enhance the impact of you picture. Think of the photo and the headline as two singers. If they sing in harmony, it is more appealing than if they both sing the same note, or they sing two discordant notes. Also, make sure your picture is relevant to the body copy of your ad. Don't sucker the reader in with what amounts to "bait-and-switch" advertising. They will dislike you for it.

20) **Use pictures which help the headline make a humorous pun or other tongue-in-cheek statement**. People like humor. Many people, though not all, appreciate the intellectual humor of a good pun, trope or quip. When asked about all the

men she’d be rumored to have dated, Mae West made millions chuckle when she quipped, *“It isn’t the men in my life, it’s the life in my men.”* Word plays range from groaners like *“Trombonists usually let things slide,”* to adroit ideas like Franklin’s, “*If we don't hang together, we will surely all hang separately.”*
The Milwaukee Art Museum ran a series of this type of ad. One showed a self-portrait of Vincent Van Gogh over the headline *"EARmark some funds for an Art Museum membership.*" Another showed Salvador Dali over the headline "*Don't dilly-Dali around*." They aren’t side-splitters, but they do bring a smile, which is often all you need to get the reader to look at your message.

In this ad for a dull, non-visual product (communications servers), One World used this technique to emphasize that you can be small and smart. The caption under the photo reads, “*The Jack Russell Terrier will stand on his front legs to mark his territory higher so that dogs who follow deduce a larger dog and therefore, a larger threat. When You’re Smaller, You have to be Smarter!”*

In a clever ad for Kitty Litter, the photo showed a black cat sitting, its long, silky tail stretched out to the side. A double white stripe ran down its back and tail. The headline read, "*A Cat without Kitty Litter Brand seems like a whole different animal*." A terrific ad, it made its entire point, addressed buyers' fears and needs, and gave the reader the core idea with one quick look at the photo and headline.

Be very careful when using this tip. In fact, it probably should come with the warning, *“Don’t try this trick at home*.” It is easy to get lost in your own “creativity.” Remember that most ads you think of using this technique will be “BAD.” Some will be ordinary, and possibly one or two may actually be pretty good. Your own humor is not a reliable judge for this type of ad. Show your ideas to many people. Listen to them. If the words *“terrible*” or “*awful*” are used, pitch the idea in the trash.

You want your ad’s picture and headline to make a point and lead readers into the body copy, not make them groan and turn the page. For example, if you are selling beer, a picture of your beer can leaning on a package of yeast shown over the headline *“Please beer with us. It’s the yeast you can do!”* is NOT the way to fame and riches.

21) Use perceived motion. Any object which does not appear to be at rest will seem in motion. In this ad, a woman appears to be flying across her living room -- the result of wearing a wonderful pair of jeans. Notice how various parts of the picture accentuate this image -- the figure is slightly blurry, her hair is floating

toward the ceiling, and her pet cats are watching (probably in horror). She is so extraordinarily high in the air that the energy and motion the photo creates is almost magical. The reader can almost see her moving.

Here’s another example. Imagine a crystal vase sitting on a table. It is at rest. Show a photo of that same vase tilted over and the viewer's eye will perceive that it is falling, because we know that when something is tilted far enough, it falls over.

A series of ads for Baccarat glassware used that idea by showing beautiful cut-glass vases and glasses falling toward a tile countertop. The headline in each ad said, "*Shattered Dreams*." These ads work because we automatically “fast forward” to the result -- a broken vase, a smashed goblet. Somehow perceived motion sucks us into the photo, involving us in the event and its outcome.

Ads for carpets and vinyl flooring often use this motion technique -- a child spilling her plate of food or a woman spilling her wine -- a potential stain heading straight for the floor. The best sort of these pictures rely on our ability to anticipate what will happen. They show a falling object, coupled with a disastrous landing place -- glass falling towards a tile floor, wine falling toward a white carpet, a man without a parachute falling toward earth, a soldier falling into a pit lined with sharp stakes. It is important that the reader be able to anticipate a terrible outcome of the fall for the picture to have maximum impact. The picture of a falling object loses most of its power if we cannot also see what it will land on. Imagine each of these pictures without their landing place and you’ll see why.

It is not only important to show where it will land, but that it will land on something which will do it great harm. For example, the Baccarat vase tipped way over grabs our attention because we know in the real world it is in the process of falling. But if it is on a pillow, the picture will not have the same impact as if it is on a hard tile countertop, or falling over the countertop toward a tile floor.

It is the perceived motion of the object which involves readers, and causes them to construct a little story in their minds of what will happen to the object. Disaster will produce more heightened feelings, and thus more attention to the photo, than a happy ending. As always, be sure the photo and headline are clearly relevant to the body copy and your product in some way.

22) **Make the picture a symbol of your product or service.** Symbols are a common and effective technique for conveying a message. We touched on this when suggesting that a violent picture could be a metaphor for your product’s benefit. Symbols are different in that they have a particular association in our minds with some idea, person, organization, etc. The Republican elephant and the Democratic donkey are both century-old picture symbols representing their political parties, used on everything from posters to pin cushions. Some lawmakers even place small statues of donkeys or elephants on their desks to tell on-lookers what party they belong to.

Other symbols scarcely outlive that which they are associated with, and can switch from one thing to another in the public’s mind. For example, during the 1960's, a pair of thickly rimmed glasses was the recognized symbol for Senator Barry Goldwater.

Now that association has been broken in most people’s minds from lack of use in the popular press.

Many products have created associations between a brand and a symbol. Many come and go, wildly popular then forgotten. That is true among large segments of the population about the Exxon Tiger (Tony the Tiger used to be an instantly recognizable figure), the Frito Bandito, and even Charmin’s lovable Mr. Whipple (who would be greeted all across America by people shouting “Don’t squeeze the Charmin!”). After being put out to pasture for over a decade, Mr. Whipple has been revived, showing that product symbols are often not dead, but merely lying dormant.

On the other hand, certain products have stuck with their symbols, making millions out of the trust and fondness buyers have for them. The Pillsbury Doughboy is a prime example. He is so well known that he appeared in gigantic form in the film *Ghostbusters 2*, and was instantly recognized by audiences everywhere.

Try This: If you want to build an identity for your brand which is associated with a visual image, then you have two directions to go.

First, you can select a visual image which is already recognizable and has a set of strong mental associations established in the minds of many buyers. For example, an attorney might select an eagle because it is associated with positive attributes, such as *“American, proud, Airborne, free, fierce, beautiful, protector”* and so on. The attorney hopes that the buyer will unconsciously transfer some of these associations from the symbol to the law firm, making it seem more desirable. We see exactly the same tactic when U.S. politicians pose in front of a large American flag (as the leaders of every other nation do in front of their own flag.)

Second, you can select a “virgin” image or create one from scratch, which is often called a Logo. Lucent’s poorly painted red circle and Tide’s blue and orange Bullseye packaging are examples of this approach. The image is like a blank slate, ready to receive whatever image you care to put on it. When George Eastman invented roll film and the little camera which used it, he wanted a name which had no other meaning. That’s how he came to call it a Kodak, a word, or typographic symbol, which had no pre-existing associations in anyone’s mind. That was the same approach Exxon took when it changed its name from Esso. There’s a lot to be said for a blank slate, if you have the money to create the image you want around that symbol, or just want a visual image (a logo) paired with your company’s name.

If you want a symbol which brings added value to the association because of what it means in other contexts, you will want to proceed carefully. When you select your brand symbol, there are a number of things to consider.

* Is the object already associated with, or is the symbol of, another popular product? If so, the money you spend on advertising could, in part, be wasted, as some people will just recall the symbol and its current association with the other product in their mind. If the symbol is already “taken,” it doesn’t mean you can’t use it, too. But it does mean you will spend more money and time to create its new and competing association with your brand in many buyers’ minds. Sometimes its better to just look around for

something similar. One attorney who was closed-out from using the eagle as his symbol for toughness chose a shark instead. People thought it was a more appropriate choice anyway.

* Does the symbol have any negative attributes hidden among its positive ones. Although they continue to be used effectively, symbols like Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben are laden with negative connotations among African Americans. So much so that many years ago a Black man who seemed to act subservient to Whites was often called “Uncle Ben” by other Blacks. Before you commit to a particular object as you symbol, be sure to do some research and ask a lot of people about the object.

* Is there a real possibility that the object could unavoidably become associated with a negative image? Some objects just naturally are at a higher risk of attracting negative associations than others. Guns are a prime example. When children in several American schools were killed by crazed murderers carrying automatic weapons, some sports teams like the Gunslingers and the Bullets decided it would be better to have different names. When you pick your object, be aware of the dangers it might pose. No one in his right mind, for example, would use a cigarette as a brand symbol today, although decades ago it was a positive trademark symbol of actress Bette Davis.

* Can it be reproduced in a small size and still be clearly recognized by a reader skimming along in a magazine? Let’s say you selected a maze as your symbol. That’s fine as long as its large and in color. But a small sized, black and white photo might be nearly unrecognizable. Test it out. Take it to a copy shop and reduce it to as small a size as you might ever use it. Show the results to other people in the store and see if they can tell you what it is.

* Will it still be useful in five years, or will the brand change into something which requires a different symbol. As we’ve seen, symbols can be a powerful means of helping people to remember your brand and a few of its abstract features (strong, tough, gentle, light, etc.). There’s no use investing advertising dollars in a symbol which will be replaced soon. It is far harder to replace an old association with a new one than it is to create one from scratch. And if you happen to hit on a symbol which people like (such as the Doughboy or Mr. Whipple), many will be enraged that you “killed off” the symbol they liked.

23) Use a Symbol for the Idea You Want to Express. You may want to use a symbol which represents an idea which you want to convey, rather than create a long lasting association with your brand.

If you want a symbolic image that represents an IDEA, you will most likely only use it once. The image isn’t so much associated with the brand, but with a feature or the brand. This is a useful approach, since the best pictures will immediately convey the heart of your idea in a single, cohesive image. The image-wrapped-up-with-an-idea approach is the visual counterpart of a product rhyme. It’s a simple, easily understood,

easily recalled shorthand. Some of the best examples of using symbols this way are found in magazine article illustrations. Take a look at some magazines for ideas. Here are some examples:

A telecommunications company ran this ad of a toe-tag, with the message that a communications system that couldn’t network was “dead.”

One magazine ran a cover photo of a stuffed and bloated dollar sign made of cloth. Around its middle was a tight belt. The tease line for the article read, "*Cost Containment -- the Squeeze Gets Tighter*."

An article about the reduced importance of OPEC in setting oil prices showed an Arab sheikh with a gasoline pump pointed to his temple, like a gun.

A steel company magazine showed a tube of steel pinched in at the middle and "wearing" a tightly laced corset. The headline read, *"Its time your steel inventory lost some of its fat.*"

Light bulbs are a symbol for ideas. Edison Electric spun that idea in a new direction by showing the socket of a light bulb attached to a piece of coal in the shape of a bulb. The headline read, "*U.S. Coal can light the way*."

A symbolic picture can also serve as a metaphor for your product's performance promise. Pictures of rabbits and tortoises have been staples to illustrate various ideas about speed and persistence.

One effective ad for Canon copiers in the Wall Street Journal showed a man staring across ten acres of green grass toward his mansion. He was leaning on an old fashioned push lawnmower. The headline read, *"Without the right equipment, a big job can seem even bigger.*" The Journal readers immediately saw the parallels between mowing that enormous lawn and a big office copying job, and between the push lawnmower and an outdated copier. More importantly, the mind transfers its emotional reaction of "*Good Heavens, he'd never get it all cut with that puny mower,*" to the job of tackling a huge copying project with outdated equipment. A strong symbolic picture can create just the emotional reaction you need.

If your product or service lends itself to a symbol, this technique offers you a potentially powerful ad design which sends your message to the more sophisticated reader very quickly. **Understanding your target audience is vital when you use this technique!** Make sure that your particular audience will recognize that the picture is symbolic, and understand both the symbol and what it stands for in the ad. Get the opinions of several people in the same cultural and socioeconomic class as your target buyers before you run it. If symbolism in general or your symbolic photo in particular doesn’t work for your target audience, drop it. You’ll be spending your money for nothing.

Finding a picture which is a “sign” of something else can also be very effective. A sign has some built-in relationship with the larger entity (as opposed to a symbol, which has no reasonable relationship -- donkeys and Democrats; three balls and pawnbrokers.) For example, school board candidates often use a picture of a school bus on their campaign signs as a way to communicate to drivers that the message has to do with schools. Other examples, a paintbrush = painter; a hammer = carpenter; a church steeple = church; a Star of David = Jewish; and a balloon = party. While each may be co-opted as a symbol of something else (as Stephen King did with a child’s balloon in his book *Tommyknockers*), most readers will immediately associate the picture with its common referent -- school, church, or profession.

A visual image associated with your company’s name is very useful in helping people remember who you are and what you do. That’s why many small service companies use common symbols like a hammer or paintbrush on their business cards to give customers a quick, visual message about who you are or what your business does. Pictures are remembered far, far better than words. If your company’s name has no obvious association with your business, linking it to a picture can help people remember you. If your company has a unique name, using a related symbol will help them remember you even better. For example, one retail tire company was called Big O Tires. In all their advertising, the “O” was a tire.

24) **Show a Before-and-After picture**. If your product or service does something visual, like removes stains, grows bigger flowers, or helps people lose weight, then try using a “before and after” technique. Show a set of two photos of the shirt or plant or your customer. The first picture is taken before applying the miracle product or service, then a second photo from the same distance and angle showing the shirt or plant or customer after using the product. Weight loss products nearly always use this technique. An effective ad for an air duct cleaning service showed the dramatic difference in a dirty and clean duct.

Here is a great example. A skin creme ran an ad with four pictures of women before and after using their creme. Some photos showed the women’s faces, while others showed tight close-ups of their skin. The headline simply read, “*Seeing Is Believing*.” Other than the product’s name, there was no other copy. It wasn’t necessary. The before-and-after photos said everything better than a thousand words could have. The inner dialog of the viewers was simple to guess, *“I look like she did, but I want to look like she does now. If it worked for her, why shouldn’t it work for me?*” Notice that the “after” picture stimulates a desire-type motivation, which the ad promises to satisfy with its miracle product.

People like such pictures because it is a way for them to see the results for themselves. People are normally distrustful of the words of an advertiser. *“Trust me, this product will make you look ten years younger!”* When it comes to advertising, readers are from Missouri, the “Show Me” state. Although they know photos can be doctored (despite the FTC rules against it), they trust pictures far more than words.

“Seeing is Believing” is still good advice for advertisers. The Gallup polling firm studied 70 advertising campaigns using this before-and-after technique, and found sales increased in every one of them. If your product or service lends itself to a before-and-after set of photos, AND that difference is one of your key selling points, then strongly consider using this technique.

25) **Use a cartoon.** Perhaps it is a throwback to our childhood, but readers will very often stop and look at an ad in the form of a cartoon, both one-panel and multi-panel. The cartoon will be more effective if it shows people. Readers will also more often read the copy that is inside a “balloon” over the character’s head (like in comic books) than the same copy in a caption below the photo.

Part of the attractiveness may be the implied promise that the reader will be entertained, either with a chuckle or a little story. Another reason is the promise that readers will have to read very little, and that it the copy is spread out into little “bites” throughout the cartoon. Readers believe they can be entertained and pick up the basic idea with very little effort on their part. And that makes the format attractive to advertisers. The easier you make it for readers to get the basic message, the happier they’ll be. Seeing cartoon “balloons” makes them happy because they know your message can’t be more than a dozen words long.

Cartoons have been used in a variety of campaigns, including political races. One candidate for a city council seat defeated a popular incumbent using a series of mud-slinging “comic adventures” run daily during the last two weeks of the campaign. The cartoons helped undecided voters to create an image they didn’t like of the incumbent.

Many advertisers have effectively used a cartoon to show how a shopper overcame a major problem by purchasing their product. For example, a mattress company ran a four panel cartoon showing the following: * A woman with her hands over her ears while her husband snored. * The woman going into the mattress store. * The salesman promising the woman her husband would sleep more quietly on their mattress. * And finally, the man and the smiling woman quietly asleep in bed.

Cartoons are effective at grabbing initial attention, but they must be constructed to hold that attention. The first panel, the first lines of copy, must suck the reader into the “plot.” The lines must be simple and easy to understand, the drawing must be clear, and the story should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Readers expect that in a story, no matter how simple. If you only have a one-panel cartoon, then be sure your copy contains the nugget of your message, because many readers may only read the cartoon balloons. Of course, they should stimulate readers to look at your body copy, just like the photo tips above.

If you can, have your cartoon drawn by a professional, or at least someone who can draw cartoons. Poor drawings will reflect badly on your product. A professional can also recommend new ways of presenting your characters that will enhance the visual impact of the cartoon, and capture more readers.

26) Use a silly picture to make a point. Pictures which are obviously silly at first glance can grab and hold attention. Polaroid once ran an ad showing a close-up of two men facing each other. The one on the right (the first picture people would normally look at) was wearing six different types of eyeglasses, all perched on one enormous, fake nose. Facing him was a man wearing one pair of glasses. The headline read, *"You'd have to combine 6 different pairs of sunglasses to get all the features in ours."* This silly picture made a clear point in a clever, visually memorable way.

This ad for a urination-control drug, for example, shows a car pulling a Port-A-Potty, with the headline “*How do You cope with Frequent Urination*?”

A Chicago newspaper used a similar silly picture technique to poke fun at the venerable *Chicago Tribune* as being old and out of touch. The photo showed a 50-year old, 200 pound woman wearing a tiara and dressed in a ballerina's tutu, with her arms and feet poised in a ballet pose. This amazing picture sucked readers in to find out what it was all about. The body copy read, "*Sad about the old star. She used to be such a paper doll. Now she puffs a lot. . . . You've got to see the <u>new</u> talent in town --The Chicago Sun-Times*."

Make sure the picture looks immediately funny and silly to other people. It's the look of the picture which carries a big part of the ad's underlying message, once the story behind it is understood.

You can use this technique equally well for television ads. For example, imagine an ad for a rum liquor in which a man and a sheepdog sit side by side at a small outdoor table watching people pass by. The man watches the pretty girls and has a drink of rum each time one smiles at him. At the end a woman with a french poodle strolls by, but doesn’t smile. But her poodle "smiles" at the sheepdog, who then leans over and laps a drink of the rum. Thus the ad remains silly throughout.

Any kind of humor is tricky. Make sure you’ve tested your idea and your finished ad on many people before you run it publicly.

A final short note on pictures. If you can afford it, use color. People associate higher quality with products shown in color, find the pictures far more memorable, and will stop to look at a color picture more often than the same picture in black and white. A major exception is the situation where readers expect to see color. Then black & white for the right product can be more effective than color.

Also, if you use more than one picture or drawing, see if you can legitimately **put a caption under the picture** which points out some important aspect of your product. **People are far more apt to read captions than your entire ad.**

So far, we've looked at what you could call advertising's "stop signs," the headline and picture. Of course, you don't have to use both, or either one. But a lot of very expensive, disastrous ad campaigns have proven that, in general, ads with headlines and pictures get the most attention. Again, let me remind you that **ten times as many people read headlines as go on to read the body copy**. Said another way, the average headline and picture fail to persuade the reader to consider the rest of the ad nine out of ten times! Unfortunately, that is most often where your real message is, a message which nine of ten people who actually stopped to look at the ad never saw. Using the above picture and headline techniques will improve those odds for you. Of course, when they do look at your body copy, you’d better have something to say that will promise to satisfy their needs, wants, fears or desires. We’ll look at how to write headlines next.

Chapter Four:

HOW TO CREATE HEADLINES THAT GRAB ATTENTION

Although people pay more initial attention to pictures than words, **the headline is the most important part of your ad.** Why? Because almost no one will read an ad without first looking at the headline. (Isn’t that just the same way you decide which stories to read in the newspaper?) If the headline (or the picture) doesn’t somehow prick their interest, they’ll seldom bother to read the “body copy,” the main text of your ad.

The role of the headline in a print ad is to grab the readers’ attention. You might call it the "*grabber*." Grabbers are what carnival side-show barkers use to lure people to pay a dollar to go inside the tent. (*“See the two-headed monkey!” See the world’s smallest man!”*) Grabbers stimulate a motivation (in this case, a desire) and promise to satisfy it. "*Hurry, hurry, hurry*," the barker shouts. "*You'll be amazed. You'll be flabbergasted. When you see the incredible Giant Rat of Sumatra!*" Hearing this offer, some casual passersby suddenly realize they wish to experience novelty, amazement, and awe.

The Barker’s Real Pitch

The barker first stimulated a desire-type motivation in his audience by promising that he has just the thing to stir their emotions (seeing a giant rat is hardly a <u>need</u> in their lives.) Then the barker explains how they can experience these feelings of awe and wonderment, thus satisfying the drive -- “*Step right up! For just one dollar you can experience this Wonder of Science*!” Notice, the barker isn’t really selling the Giant Rat. **He is selling feelings** -- awe, wonder, excitement, maybe even some fear. The Rat is just the means by which to create those feelings in the paying crowd.

The barker offered to satisfy the crowd’s desire for the promised feelings, in return for just one dollar. That is the deal being offered -- you give me a dollar, and I’ll make you feel excited, awed, and scared within two minutes. What a deal! Suddenly people who had no thought of wanting to gaze at a big, hairy rat just one minute before, are overcome by an awakened urge to see one. And they can do it right now, if they’ve just got a dollar left. Notice, the REAL deal was NOT “*you give me a dollar and I’ll let you look at a rat.*” Recognizing the difference is a key to creating good psychological marketing.

The Importance of the Headline

The role of the headline and picture in an ad is the same as a carnival barker -- they stimulate the readers’ wish for some feeling and promise fulfillment. It doesn’t have to be an exotic wish; it can be as prosaic as plumbing. For example, one effective ad began with the headline *“Revolutionary New Drain Opener Invented; Unclogs Drains in 1 Second.”* Since nearly everyone in the product’s target market has struggled with a balky

drain, the promise of a way to simply unclog a drain will grab attention. Is the customer buying a drain unclogger? No, he’s buying a smoothly operating plumbing system, time, reduction of frustration, reduction of fear (about the toilet overflowing), and a feeling of pride that he can get the “man’s work” around the house done properly.

Do you see the basic pitch for the drain cleaner is no different than the barker’s pitch for the giant rat? You give us your money, and we’ll make you feel the emotions you want. Unclogging the drain is the same as looking at the rat. It is the necessary action to get to the emotions. The only difference is that with the drain opener the consumer is buying deferred satisfaction -- he won’t feel the full reward for his foresight until the drain is clogged. He might even entertain the idea of creating a small clog, “just to see if this stuff works,” and to experience those feelings of pride and power. If the real or potential problem was smaller, like a slow-running drain, his fear, frustration, and feelings of inadequacy would be far less, thus the impetus to buy an unclogger would be reduced. (If you don’t believe this, you aren’t a man, or aren’t married to one!)

In these, and hundreds of other cases, people are not really buying products, they are buying emotions -- they desire to feel satisfaction, pride, hope, fear, excitement, amazement, love, security, and so on. To sell them your product, you must first know what they really want to buy.

Advertising often goes astray when the seller doesn’t recognize what the buyer really wants. For example, how much perfume would a new fragrance sell if its ads emphasized the no-clog spray head, the easy-grip shape, and the shatterproof bottle? Not much. Women don’t buy perfume for functional reasons. They don’t really buy perfume at all. They buy the feeling of hope it give them, the feeling of desirability which they see in men’s faces, the chance for an ideal romance, the possibility of meeting the guy of their dreams. And every perfume maker knows it. It is the quintessential example of “selling the sizzle, not the steak.”

The Power of the Headline

How important are headlines for the professional ad man? Quoting Claude Hopkins again, "***It is not uncommon for a change in headlines to multiply returns from five to ten times over."*** Imagine that power packed inside a simple headline. The success of failure of a business can easily turn on the impact of a headline.

If print ads, especially the headlines, were wired for sound, each ad would be shouting, *“Hey! Over here. Read me. Look here!*” That, in essence is the sort of mental tug which ads create in the minds of readers. Think of an ad this way: basically, you are asking your reader, "*Excuse me, but could I have a minute of your valuable time? I think you'll like what I'm selling*." It is usually the headline or the picture which determines whether they decide to give you their time, or not. In most cases, it’s “not.”

“Lack of Time” regularly tops the list of problems for modern Americans, especially women. Asking for even a few seconds is serious business. Just think how important a few seconds or a few minutes suddenly seem to you when you receive a call from a

telemarketer. Your readers have a similar reaction when browsing through a magazine or newspaper. Your headline helps readers to decide, “*OK, I’ll give them a few seconds*.”

Why do readers make that choice? Because your headline or picture makes them think they will get something in return -- a few seconds of time in exchange for new information, emotional stimulation, something free, etc. Constructing a headline which helps them make the choice to stop is a not a simple matter. It is rooted in the psychological makeup of your target readers. **Remember -- Don’t write it from inside your head. Write it from inside your reader’s mind.**

Here are some ideas about how to create a headline that stops traffic. Use these ideas as a way to excite your imagination, as guideposts to evaluate headlines you create, and as a repair manual to fix headlines that don’t work. In all cases, use your common sense. Use the ones that apply, ignore the others.

1) **Make it short**. Notice when you read a newspaper that you often purposely avoid looking at the ads. You’ll look at even the smallest story about a jeep rollover in Sierra Leone, but you won’t look at a half page ad for a clothing sale at the Dillards down the street! By any measure, the sale has more potential impact on your life than the African jeep, but you select the jeep anyway. Why? Because the news story doesn’t DEMAND your time; it isn’t trying to sell you something. It doesn’t require that you make any mental decisions about the products. And it offers the slightest hope of something interesting, odd, revealing or useful.

Readers of your advertisements indulge you by giving you their time, so you should make it as simple for them to understand your message as possible and still make your point. Remember that they have visually “stopped in” to give you a glance at the doorway. It’s your responsibility to draw them over the threshold with your headline, while not wasting their time if they are not a candidate.

A short headline is generally easier to read and understand, so readers prefer it. A headline like *“Pepsi Hits The Spot*" is faster for a reader to mentally process and understand than one like, "*Pepsi is Very Refreshing When You Are Really Thirsty*."

Short headlines are generally also easier to remember. Many readers will just glance at the headline. Short, memorable headlines which contain the brand’s name help reinforce reader’s existing memory trace for the brand and its general image (“*Canon Can Do*.”) Headline branding is a good way to get something extra out of your ad dollars. Famed ad man David Ogilvy preached the doctrine of having the brand name in the headline for just this reason. (But some of Ogilvy’s headlines were far from short, as you’ll see later on.)

Some effective, short headlines include the famous “*Lemon*” and “*Think Small*” in different Volkswagen ads, “*Health Nut*” for Sunkist orange juice, and “*Good and Cheap*” for a chain of discount stores. Exotic places can simply use their name to provoke images of romance and adventure: “***Hawaii***,” “***Paris***,” or “***Rio***.” Places without an exotic image can’t benefit from this technique. “*Kansas City*” doesn’t create the same

aura. But it can still be effective by using a short heading that plays off the image it does have. “*Kansas CITY?*”

A single word headline can sometimes be useful for another reason. The oddity of a single word can stop readers cold if it creates a question in their minds. For example, each ad in a series of negative political ads highlighting the poor record of one candidate began with one word, such as “*Oops!*” “*Oh-Oh*!” “*Ouch*!”, etc. The big, bold headlines created eye-stopping appeal, generated reader comment and anticipation of the next ad, while providing a little humor to a dull subject.

Don’t use a short headline just because it is short. Remember, your headline must pull the reader across the threshold and into your ad. The fact that your headline is short won’t do the trick by itself, but it can help.

2) **Create a mental image**. Some words (called "concrete" words) create a mental picture (image) when we hear or read them. For example, "Hammer," or "*Flower*." Other words don't generally create an image. They are called "abstract" words, like *"freedom," "pleasure,"* and *"caring*."

We remember pictures far better than words, so it makes sense (supported by years of research) that **words which create mental pictures in the reader’s mind will be understood and recalled better than words which do not.** For example, a cosmetic ad had this headline, "*See your mother on weekends. Not every time you look in the mirror*." This headline created a strong mental image, raised a fear and promised to satisfy it -- the essence of a good headline.

The best mental images are those which are already rich in associations in our minds. For example, “Apple Pie” has more and richer associations for most people than “rhubarb pie” because nearly everyone has seen, smelled, and eaten apple pie for decades in all sorts of settings, while few people could even tell you what a rhubarb looks like, much less what a pie tastes like. Product headlines like “*Better than Home Cookin’,” “The Drill Your Dad Would Have Bought*,” “*Glade Puts a Rose Garden in Your Bathroom*” all tap into different kinds of rich memories most readers have to create a picture inside their heads. By associating that picture with your product, you increase the chance that readers will recall your brand in a positive way.

3) **Use a strong word**. Short, emotion-packed words in bold letters grab attention. It's often best to use them alone. For example, a headline may say "*Pain*" or "*Sex*." A financial seminar was advertised with the simple, catchy headline “*Bankrupt.*” The word should be short, often used (for familiarity), and laden with emotions. Just a glance at such words will often trigger an emotional response -- and that is often enough to hook the reader. Of course, the headline should have some relationship to the rest of the ad.

You could also use two or three short words together, which creates a different, more complex, meaning than either word alone. For example, "Office Sex” or "Growing

Pains" or “Eat It Raw” (a headline for a seafood restaurant). Try out several alternatives before deciding on such a headline. Remember, **the headline isn't meant to sell, it is only meant to act as a stop sign, leading readers to look at your ad.**

4) **Use a mysterious word or phrase**. "*Ancient Secrets Revealed!*," "*Lost Vault Uncovered!!*," and "*Mysterious Discovery!!!*" are examples of this technique. People love mysteries. If your headline promises your readers secrets, intrigue, mystery, or oddities, they will often stop to learn more. [Note how **exclamation marks lend drama and excitement** to the headline. Read On!!!]

People's love for such stimulation hasn't changed since P.T. Barnum made a fortune on freaks and oddities, and Robert Ripley did the same with his "*Believe It Or Not*" museum. One of the finest examples of pure “amazing mystery” public relations hype was created by the producers of the Geraldo Rivera TV show, who built American viewers to a frenzy waiting for the show in which Geraldo would unlock the newly-discovered vault of Al Capone. While the show was ridiculed for promising “Amazement!,” while delivering an empty box, the hype was first class. Do you see this is the kissing cousin to our carnival barker’s pitch to see the giant rat? People and places change, but good techniques are with us always.

Again, make sure your headline ties into the rest of your ad -- and deliver on your promise. Mr. Rivera will never live down that one terrible moment when the door opened, and millions of excited viewers saw -- nothing.

5) **Use the words "How To" in your headline**. America is a nation of doers. From fixing cars and screen doors to fixing our health and golf games, we like to do things, and do them pretty well. Ads which promise information about how to do something will get attention and readership. Even if readers don't need the information now, they may want to know how to do it later. "*I think I'll glance at this tip on removing blood stains, just in case I should cut myself.*" Or, “*I could use these tips on trimming roses next Fall.”* Or, “*You can’t tell when knowing how to saddle a horse may come in handy.”* Even an ad with the headline *“How To Deliver A Baby*” would get good readership -- even though nearly every reader knew they would probably have no use for the information. (Except in a daydream: John is on a plane bound for London when a woman cries out, “*My water broke!*” and the captain announces, *“Is there a doctor on board?*” John rises from his seat, holding the article he’s saved for so many years. “*Yes,*” he cries, “*I can deliver your baby! I read how in this ad!*”)

Ad headlines which tie this technique into the reader’s Fear Drive can gain a lot of attention -- “*How To Safeguard Your Child’s Health*,” “*How to Stop Going to the Dentist*,” or “*How to Avoid Prostate Cancer*” are examples of ads which offer a step-by-step list of ways to reduce readers’ fears. Again, be sure to give the reader some positive, concrete information that is immediately useful. Promising the answer tomorrow, or in your new book, is a betrayal of the reader’s trust.

“How To” headlines work equally as well for any type of motivation (needs, wants, fears, and desires -- especially desires.) It is often used to stimulate a long-held desire: *“How to Retire Wealthy*,” *“How To Meet The Man of Your Dreams,”* or “*How To Sell Anybody Anything*” are three examples of headlines that tap into powerful human desires.

6) **Make a promise**. "*Save $100 a Month!*," or "*Lose 10 Pounds in a Week!!*," or "*Free Jamaica Vacation!!!*" are headlines that promise readers things they want (thus stimulating one of their "want" or "desire" motivations.) One common type of “promise” headline offers a money-back guarantee. This promise addresses one of the toughest fears to overcome -- the fear that if you don’t like it, you’re stuck with it. The money-back guarantee promises to satisfy that fear by offering a “no risk” sale.

An ad’s promise is just as real to the consumer as if it were made by the company’s president. It implies a bond of trust. *“I’ll try it because you’ve promised to take it back if I don’t like it.”* Any company that betrays that trust by breaking its promise has committed one of the most damning crimes against its buyers that one can imagine, short of selling defective and dangerous products. Never use the excuses like “its in the fine print” or “you misinterpreted this word” or “you failed to carry out all 19 steps of the refund process correctly.” If you have some caveats to your promise, like “not returnable if worn or soiled,” be up front about them in your ad’s promise. It shouldn’t be in the headline, but it shouldn’t be hidden or disguised, either. Salesmen have said for over a century, “The most important thing a salesman has is his word.” That’s true of ads also.

TWA created an effective “promise” ad using two headlines. The top one read “Promises Made,” and the second read “Promises Kept.” Under the first were the promises about improved service the airline made the prior year. Under the second were the results of TWA’s efforts -- an award by J.D. Power & Associates for Customer Satisfaction. The ad engenders trust by implying *“we came through on our promise before, and we’ll do it again for you.”* Research on promises agree with our own common sense -- they create an impact. Adman David Ogilvy says, "*The headlines which work the best are those which promise the reader a benefit.*" Ogilvy also sites research showing that if a headline is in quotation marks, recall is increased by 28%.

[Note: This may be true, but I caution you that a fair amount of advertising research is not up to the scientific standards of even psychological research. The number and type of test subjects used often make it dangerous to generalize the results to large groups of buyers. Still, such ideas are worth noting and trying as long as you don’t take them on faith alone.]

Make sure you really do explain how readers can take advantage of the promise. An advertisement brochure shouts “*Work At Home*,” then explains that readers can *“Earn Up to $40,000 a year as a medical claims & billing specialist.*” The headline makes two promises, and suggests the means to achieve them is in the reader’s grasp -- if she turns the page to find out how take advantage of this amazing opportunity. Make sure the steps are clear and simple to understand. Promises can be used for products or services. They usually describe the outcome of the use, rather than the features of the

product or service itself. For example, one headline read, “Stronger Than Morphine, But Safer Than Aspirin.” This headline uses two motivations: desire and fear. It promises safe pain relief. And it offers another promise at the bottom of the ad, a money-back guarantee.

One of the most successful of all such “promise” headlines is Dale Carnegie’s: *"How To Win Friends and Influence People."* That headline promises to satisfy two of the reader's important "wants" -- friends and power. By promising two benefits, the headline does three important things: (a) it attracts people who primarily would like to have friends; (b) it also attracts a different set of people who would primarily like to influence people, such as salesmen or any other person whose job involves “selling” a message; and (c) it offers a double-appeal to most readers who would like to have both skills. If you have two such strong appeals, by all means put them both in your headline. Also note how this headline implicitly links the “Promise” technique with the “How To” technique to create a strong “stopper.”

7) **Ask a question**. Daily life has programmed us to answer questions. Even if you don't verbalize the answer, you probably think the answer. (“*Have you seen an elephant today?*” -- silly, but you still immediately thought of the answer. Right? The writer has in a small way involved you in the message. Reader involvement is a key reason to use the Question technique.)

You can use this natural response by having your headline ask a question. A Smith Barney ad asks readers, "*Which trends will affect the markets*?” A bank credit card ad asks, “*Need Credit*?” An insurance company asks, “Is Your Family Protected?” And an ad for a school of voice asks, “*Can You Carry A Tune*?”

In each case, **it is important that the answer be “Yes”** to a Yes / No question, or “I don’t know” to open-ended questions, like the “*Which Trends*...?” above. Those answers will lead the reader to explore further.

In general its better if readers don’t respond “no” to questions, since you really want them to say “yes” to your product pitch. But this isn’t a hard and fast rule. For example, Federal Express ran an effective positioning ad which showed a Post Office Priority Mail package with some of its negative features like “no tracking” and “no proof of delivery” written alongside. The FedEx headline read “This is Priority?” The ad went on to describe the good features of FedEx service. It effectively stimulated some specific motivations a buyer has when selecting a carrier, positioned the Post Office as a poor second choice, and positioned FedEx as the best choice. This is a nice use of the “Do you want this one or that one” technique.” By setting up the selection problem as one of two choices, then showing the other choice is clearly bad, you’ve effectively positioned your product as the first choice -- and haven’t had to mention any of your other competitors!

You'll note that these headlines **focus on a single identified “hot button” motivator (or series of highly interrelated buttons) of the target buyer**. Stimulating the motivations first encourages the reader to look a little further into the ad copy. A

Sprint long distance telephone company ad focused on a nearly universal desire with a headline asking, "*Wouldn't you like some FREE TIME to build your business*?" The reader’s unspoken response is, “*Sure! Who wouldn’t?”* That response makes the reader a participant in the ad, and encourages him/her to read a little more of the ad. The reader, skeptical but always hopeful, reasons, *“Who knows? Maybe they really do have something. Let’s see what they’re offering.”*

Do This: To use this tip, review the list of top “hot button” motivators (needs, wants, fears, or desires) of your target buyers. Select one of the most powerful motivators. Phrase that motivation in terms of a question. The question should be phrased to have real “stopping power.” That’s the way you stimulate the reader’s motivation. (“Want to be Popular with Girls?”) Once stimulated, the reader is often willing to head down that path in search of satisfaction -- by reading your ad. Of course, you must be prepared to explain how a feature of your product can satisfy that motivation. Otherwise, you’ve deceived your readers, and deserve their condemnation.

Here are two examples of using the Question technique. An ad for a cologne containing sexually-attractive pheromones asked readers, “*Been Laid Lately*?” Such a headline, focusing blatantly on one of the most powerful human motivations, stopped readers in their tracks. No matter the unspoken answer, it is likely they will read the ad.

A brokerage house ad read “Is Something Hiding In Your Mutual Funds?” (It’s a nice headline because it not only asks a question, but implies some menace that may be affecting you -- and you don’t even know about it.) The ad goes on to tell the reader their mutual fund may be invested in tobacco companies without the investor’s knowledge. It offers a Web site where investors can check it out. Both these headlines get you involved by generating an answer in your mind and a thought, “I wonder if I’m right?”

When you ask your question, **don’t equivocate or beat around the bush.** The reader won’t usually give you the time it takes to decipher a tricky or unclear headline. “*Been Laid*?” “*Got Milk?” “Going Broke*?” and “*Retiring Soon*?” are all simple, clear, grabbing questions that demand a response from the reader.

8) **Make a threat**. "*Don’t Leave Home Without It”* suggests that something bad will happen to the reader -- unless he carries an American Express card at all times. Threats can even sound silly, like *“Read this or Die!”* Threats stimulate the reader’s fear drive, often about something he/she wasn’t even thinking about before reading the headline. “*Don’t Be a Sucker*” implies something out there will make the reader a sucker, unless he/she reads this ad (for a computer). “*A Virus Is Waiting For Your Computer*” threatens hard drive havoc, unless the reader buys this software program. “*Even Friends Won’t Tell You -- You Have Bad Breath!”* stimulates our fear of offending others, then promises to take that fear away -- with Scope. In these ads, like in old western movies, the product plays the role of the “cowboy in the white had riding to the rescue!”

Like some other types of headlines, threats create a simple “stimulus - response” chain of mental actions in the reader: The headline stimulates a fear response, causing the reader to seek a way to reduce that fear. *“Termites Could Be Turning Your Home Equity Into Sawdust.*” Finding that way (through your product or service) stimulates a calming response, which reduces the fear. *“Let Orkin Protect Your Investment*.”

However, with the reduction of the fear response, that need will not be as great, until it is stimulated again. *(“Oh, good, now I know how to stop termites if I see sawdust piles.”*) Of course, the seller wants the reader to buy the product or service. That’s one reason many ads encourage readers or listeners to “*call right now*!” -- before your fear or desire wears off. Or the ad stimulates a fear which cannot be reduced without action, such as showing the reader a situation in which some poor fool didn’t act when he had the chance -- like you do now! -- and look what it got him, he’s standing in his attic staring at a hole in his roof the size of Montana! *That could be you, bub, so pick up that phone before it’s too late! You can’t see them eating your house. You don’t know what those pesky termites are up to Right Now. Don’t take a chance, call now.*

A threat headline doesn’t have to state the obvious. It can ask the reader to take a small mental step, but just a small one. For example, an ad for a face creme used the headline *“See Your Mother on Holidays, Not Every Time You Look in the Mirror*.” The reader is asked to take one small mental step -- *The difference between my mother’s face and mine is . . . Wrinkles!!! Lord, what a terrible thought to see my face in the mirror sporting my mother’s wrinkles. What, oh what, can prevent this catastrophe? New Osmotics? Never heard of it. Who cares? It’s awakened a hidden fear of mine, and promised to stop those wrinkles. I’ll try anything that makes that promise!*

Another form of this “threat” technique is to suggest readers will not meet their responsibilities --unless they take action now. One famous example is an insurance ad from the 1930's showing a drawing of a grieving widow and small children in an almost bare living room lit only by the fire from a hearth. The headline reads, "*He Didn't Have Life Insurance*." The stark picture and the headline combined to bring many readers up short. In the rush of their daily lives, insurance for the future of their families was often forgotten. The ad forced readers to see their own weeping wife and children in that picture, and consider if they had done enough to protect them from a similar fate. Of course, low-cost, easy-pay life insurance was the best and quickest way to reduce their guilt, their fear, and let them get back to daily life. That ad sold a ton of insurance.

The threat technique should arouse a LOW level of fear, anxiety, or guilt. Psychological research has shown that stimulating high levels of fear or anxiety are not effective in changing behavior because they make readers very uncomfortable. Low

levels of these negative emotions are tolerable, and stimulate the person to seek a way to get rid of those feelings by seeking some solution to the problem which produced them.

For example, one study on dental hygiene showed three groups of people different pictures of a man's teeth. All ads had the same copy -- focusing on the importance of daily brushing and regular check-ups. One picture showed a man with a wonderful smile. In the second, his teeth were obviously in need of dental care. But in the third, the man's teeth were horrid. Results showed that people in the second group changed their dental behavior more than the other two groups. The people in the third group were so disgusted with the idea that their teeth may someday look like the picture that they simply blocked out the entire ad.

9) **Offer Safety From Danger**. We all fear things, like crime, disease, disability, old age, loneliness, etc. The role of a headline in a "fear" ad is to stimulate a fear, then suggest a way to reduce it. *"Breast Cancer -- Early Warning Signs,*" or "*Got Smelly Feet ? -- Dr. Sholl's Can Help*." Of course headlines can simply raise the fear, hoping the reader understands a solution will be offered in the ad -- "*Home Break-ins On The Rise!*" *"Boomers Can't Afford to Retire."*

Some products or services offer protection from **hidden dangers**. Tylenol's early ads warned that aspirin could cause "*hidden stomach bleeding*," and promised that Tylenol was safe for your stomach. An ad for Anti-Virus software begins, *"You Can't See a Computer Virus -- Until It's Too Late!"* This ad for a stomach protection medicine promises safety from heartburn. An air duct cleaner's ad stated, "*We Clean the Air You Breathe*." The ad was accompanied by dramatic Before-and-After photos of a filthy and a clean air duct.

This air duct ad stimulates a fear seldom considered -- "*Am I breathing dirty air into my body, and I don't even know it!*?" Consumers have many real fears, but they aren't motivating fears unless you remind the reader about them, such as -- "*Don't Be Embarrassed by Gas."* **Look for hidden fears you can stimulate then satisfy** with your product or service, especially if those fears may be raised at the expense of a competing product, as Tylenol did with aspirin.

Public service ads often use the fear motivation effectively to encourage people to make changes in their lives or government policies. An ad by the Arizona Health Department showed a cigarette over the headline "All it takes to harm an unborn baby is a little stick." An ad for an eye disease organization showed a small child with sunglasses and a white cane over the headline "Who says early eye testing isn't important?"

10) **Use the word "Be."** Many readers would like to be something they are not. *"Be a Teacher," "Be a King in Your Own Home," "Be a Successful Stockbroker!"* "*Be a Lover She'll Remember*" all encourage readers to fantasize for a moment. "*What would it*

be like if my family really did treat me like a king? Wow! I’d like that. I wonder if maybe these guys know something? Let’s see...” **Once the reader is wondering, he’s ready to look at the rest of your ad.**

Most people would like to be different in some area of their lives -- professional, personal, spiritual. If a substantial part of your targeted audience shares this desire, then a “Be” headline may lure them to consider your offer.

11) **Make a Prediction**. "*You'll Be A Millionaire By Next Year!*" suggests the pathway to riches is right in this ad, waiting for the reader. "*Recession Will Strike Soon*" is a similar type ad. In these cases, the headline suggests a future event which readers would naturally be interested in avoiding. This is often enough to get them to read further. **The prediction should be powerful**, not wimpy. Prediction headlines like, “*You’ll Like the New Tide*,” or *“Economy Could Slow A Bit Next Quarter*” aren’t strong enough to grab much attention.

12) **Make it sexy**. One of the 10 Commandments of advertising is that sex sells, or at least gets the customers' attention. Early in the sexual revolution of the '60s, one provocative headline for hair coloring said, "*Does She, or Doesn't She*?" A modern ad for Ondine perfume shows a woman leaning away while a man pulls at her wrist; the headline reads, *"Don't Wear Ondine Unless You Mean It.*" An ad for a cognac shows a man and woman about to passionately kiss; the headline reads, “*If you’ve ever been kissed, you already know the feeling of Cognac*.” All these headlines are examples of mildly suggestive ways to grab attention.

Another ploy is to **use sexual humor**. For example, Dial used a mild form of it by showing a wet bar of soap under an bold headline, “*Singles Bar*.” In an ad for jeans, two smiling women are looking at a man as he walks away; the headline reads, “*What’s the first thing a woman notices about a man? His. . . personality.”*

When using sex in a headline, **be sure of two things**: (1) The headline must be tied closely with the product, and not just there for titillation (like a bikini-clad blond leaning over a new car.) (2) Be sure the headline isn't too bawdy, blatant, or erotic. For example, a new car ad featuring the bikini-clad blond above with the headline “I just love a stick shift” would be over the top, even though no erotic words are used. The juxtaposition of the blond and the headline create a double entendre in the reader’s mind which totally blows away the product’s message. Even more over the top is this example -- an ad featuring a bare-chested man holding a Popsicle, the headline reading, "*Suck It!*"

Fortunately those who run most print media outlets act as a built-in guardian to help you avoid this type of mistake by evaluating each ad according to the publication’s “community standards” guidelines. About the closest average American consumers like to get to public eroticism in product advertising is demonstrated by these headlines: (1) Brooke Shields in a Calvin Klein jeans ad saying, "*Nothing Gets Between Me and My Calvins*." (2) A sexy woman in an ad for a men's shaving creme purrs, "*Take it Off. Take*

It All Off." (3) Another sexy woman in an ad for a men's cologne whispers, "*My Men Wear English Leather, Or They Wear Nothing At All."*

While the sexual content and overtones in television programs has increased substantially in the 90's (Jay Leno, for example, says things that you couldn't even imply in the 1970's), it seems that television commercials are not following that lead, but are falling back to safer territory after several years of vocal protests about the sexy content of commercials, especially in their use of young boys and girls.

Sexy ads stimulate a particular site in the hypothalamus gland of our brain which produces arousal. This is a powerful urge which can sweep away all other thoughts. In one famous experiment, male rats had electrodes implanted into their hypothalamus. They quickly learned to perform a simple task when they were rewarded with an electrical stimulation of the sexual arousal site of their hypothalamus. In fact, the desire for that stimulation was so great that the rats would repeatedly perform the task, forgoing food and water, until they collapsed.

Use headlines which only create mild sexual arousal. The danger of creating more than mild arousal is that the powerful sexual drive will interfere with the reader's attention to, and memory of, the product's message, leaving only memories of the sexy man or woman in the ad, as readers play out erotic fantasies in their mind.

13) **Report some interesting news**. David Ogilvy suggests headlines that report news are "sure fire." He sites research showing that ads that contain news are 22% more likely to be recalled than those which don't. News can be anything -- a new product, an improved product, a new way to do a common job, a research report, a discovery, the results of a poll, etc. Since news is important to readers, use it in your headline to attract attention and create interest: "*Red is the Color for Summer*," or "*Cure for Insomnia Discovered*" creates interest in knowing more, leading readers into your ad.

One way we commonly report news in advertisements is to use the word "*New!"* However, the word is so overused that it doesn't carry the impact it one did. Some advertisers try to liven it up by modifying it -- "*Brand New*;" or doing typographic things to it -- NEW! It's still a good word for a headline, but if you're creative, you can write news headlines that will do better.

One approach you might consider is to determine something which your customers would find interesting -- the preferred configuration of your product, natural or scented versions, large or small, round or square (look what Wendy's did with that one), water or oil soluble, favorite colors, etc. Once you've surveyed a reasonable number of customers (somewhere between 50 and 250 is a reasonable number to create some confidence in the results), use the top vote-getters as a hook for your headline: *"Study Shows Women Prefer Natural Scents," "New Report Finds Pros Favor Oil-Based Paint," "Customers Say 'Make It Square' 2 to 1!"* You can use an exclamation point to emphasize the startling (and thus interesting) nature of the finding. See the difference? "Women Prefer Sleep to Sex" vs. "Women Prefer Sleep to Sex!"

14) **Make it novel**. Common words or objects used in unusual ways can create interest because our minds respond to novelty. One famous study involving a chimp in a windowless box showed that he would actively learn a task if rewarded with a view outside through a sliding panel in the box. People enjoy novelty because it stimulates the brain in a pleasurable way. One of the attractions of a vacation is seeing new sights. Even taking a different way to work may be enjoyable because of new surroundings.

Ads can use this desire for novelty to attract readers. For example, a headline for Campbell’s Soup broth read, *"Soup On the Rocks,"* and showed a picture of a hand pouring a can of Campbell's beef broth into the glass filled with ice cubes. Since we normally don’t think of soup (hot) and ice cubes (cold) in the same thought, their juxtaposition creates a novel idea, making the reader want to learn how these two opposing ideas can fit together. The body copy then explains that readers could enjoy iced broth on a hot summer day.

Novelty can be great. But it can also be a disaster. If the reader cannot understand the headline or the ad, many will not waste time trying to figure it out. One headline for a U.S. audience, for example, was printed in Croatian, hoping to lure readers to sign up for a tour of Eastern Europe. But the Croatian headline was meaningless to nearly all readers. They decided they didn’t want to waste time figuring it out since there was nothing to prick their imagination, so they turned the page. Remember, too, a headline doesn’t have to be in another language to be incomprehensible. You want a headline that creates the thought in your reader’s mind, *“Huh! I wonder ...*,” rather than *“What the hell is that!?*”

15) **Reveal a trend**. Most people want to know what is going to happen in areas they are concerned about. Trends are recognized ways to better predict the future. By revealing a trend, you are offering your reader a peak at the future. Of course, it must be a future he/she cares about. For example, a subscription advertisement for the women’s magazine Elle uses the headline, *“Stay Ahead of the Latest Fashion Trends.”* That will appeal to many women, but few men. On the other hand, “*The Disappearing Six Cylinder Engine*” will probably have more appeal to men, and especially to younger men.

Using trends in headlines is especially useful if the reader can use the information to satisfy an important motivation in his/her life -- a key need, want, fear, or desire of the reader. For example, many stock market publications offer an analysis of the latest stock trends, suggesting the smart reader can use the information to make money. This technique will only work if it can help satisfy an important motivation. For example, the headline *“New Trends in Waste Product Management”* will create a very limited readership.

Businesses can use this tip to their advantage in two ways by conducting their own research. Begin by asking a few of your customers the type of information they wish they had. For example, if you are in the apparel industry, your manufacturer customers

may want to know “*Do women in higher economic brackets care if clothing buttons are plastic?*” Knowing that answer could provide a small edge to clothing manufacturers.

You could, but you don’t need to, hire a research firm to carry out a scientifically designed survey. Or you could do the survey yourself by e-mail, phone or letter. Just remember to randomly select people within the group you’re interested in (like rich women). Even in the largest groups, you don’t really need more than about 250 people to get a statistically useful answer, and a lot less if the size of the group is relatively small (like a few thousand).

Use the results of your survey as the ad’s headline. *“Women Hate Plastic Buttons, Survey Shows*.” (Yes, the sentence isn’t grammatical, but I personally like to get the “meat” of the headline up front to catch those eyes just skimming through the magazine or newspaper.) Be sure to put your company’s name in the first line of the body copy. (“A survey conducted by Harbinzer Manufacturing found affluent women dislike plastic buttons on clothing, especially better and designer clothing.”) Next, offer to send the reader a copy of the study -- and, of course, send along your catalog of products, too! Finally, be sure to tie the finding to one of your products, which leads the reader naturally into the heart of your ad. (“For two decades Harbinzer Manufacturing has offered quality bone buttons preferred by affluent women. These buttons are made of . . .” etc.)

If you use this technique, it is important to include a line about your methodology and statistical results to provide credibility and reduce the reader’s natural conclusion that you did some self-serving, slipshod research (which is a good reason to hire a research firm if you can afford to.) For example, *“231 affluent women with over $100,000 in household income responded. 78.4% preferred bone over plastic buttons, and 21.6% said it didn’t matter. Only 1% preferred plastic buttons. Statistically, there’s a 95% chance the results are reliable.*”

Not only does this research provide you with a good ad headline, it also elevates the perception of your company in the minds of your customers. Harbinzer Manufacturing is no longer just a button maker, it is also a source of valuable industry information. By providing regular survey results, your company will solidify this position as an industry leader.

16) **Offer “Inside” information**. We all love to know things others don’t. That’s why gossip is such a powerful attractor (the cover headline “*Bruce and Demi Splitting*?” sold a hundred thousand National Inquirers all by itself.) Examples of “insider” headlines that sell: An investment book promises *“Learn How Warren Buffett Made His Millions.”* A women’s magazine promises, “*What Drives Men Wild With Passion*.” A drug ad headline reads, “*How Doctors Cure Their Own Insomnia.”* A sports magazine promises “*Mark McGuire’s Secret To Hitting Home Runs.”* These type of headlines promise to tell you facts that most people don’t know, thereby giving you an advantage in finance, love, or gossip. Often the headlines sound more promising than the facts can support. (“*Mark McGuire says the key to hitting home runs is to ‘keep your eye on the ball and take a level*

swing.") Your 'insider' information doesn't have to be earthshattering, but it should be helpful or interesting to many readers, otherwise they feel they've been hoodwinked by your headline.

Take the time to study the covers of some popular magazines and tabloids. Their covers are just the same as the Headline and Picture combination of traditional print advertising. Each story that is hyped, each picture selected, is designed to make you pick up the magazine. Magazines like Cosmopolitan, Sports Illustrated, and Better Homes & Gardens, among others have survived for decades because they knew how to attract readers with their covers. After all, who wouldn't pick up a magazine that promised *"Cops Force Royal Couple to Have Sex in Times Square!"*?

The value of insider information to a reader or group of readers is subjective. Promising one group of men, age 18 - 39, the story of "*Bobby Unger's Racing Secrets*" will make the magazines fly off the shelf. While a second group of men, also age 18 - 39, will care less. You must be sure before you use this type of headline that the information offered will attract readers' attention "like a wiggle worm dangled in front of a fish."

Do this: Study the demographics of those who read the publication you're considering for your ad (their sales office will be happy to tell you.) Then use the list of these target buyers' needs, wants, fears, and desires to isolate one which could be satisfied with Insider Information that you have. Note that your 'insider information' can satisfy any one of these areas. Don't overlook 'fear' *("Boss Tells How He Picks Employees to Fire")* and 'desire' ("*Boss Reveals Type of Employees She'll Never Fire*." Write a catchy headline promising this information. Then deliver it in the body of the ad or in the product.

17) **Give a Test**. People always want to learn more about themselves. If they can do it quickly, and without much bother, all the better. Women's magazines like Cosmopolitan and Glamour always seem to offer tests like "*How to Tell If He Really Loves You*," or "*Test Your Sexual Stamina."* Financial magazines offer a Quick Quiz to *"Test Your Financial I.Q."* A health magazine ad for a high blood pressure medicine tells readers to "*Check Your Danger Signals for Stroke."* All offer a simple true/false or multiple choice test supposedly designed to help you learn something important about yourself or others. That's the value added the ad offers in exchange for the time you give to read it.

If your product class lends itself to a self-test which will give readers some personal insights, consider a "Test" technique headline. For example, an ad for a product that inflates tires in an emergency could begin, "*Test Your Tires For Defects Before a Blow Out*." Even if readers don't use your product, a value-added ad like this will create good will. Shell did this for years with their little yellow car safety booklets, offering road tips, tests, and advertisements for Shell Oil products.

One warning: Be sure to tie your product’s name and logo closely to the test in your ad. Otherwise, readers will take the test, be grateful for the information, and never realize what company did it. Marketers will often put a dotted line around the test, suggesting the reader cut it out for future reference. It’s a good idea -- if your name is prominently inside the dotted lines.

One easy way is to put your name into the name of the test -- *“Discount Tire Road Hazard Guide,” “Arby’s How’s Your Heart Test,”* or *“Albertson’s Vegetable Freshness Test.”* By naming the test for your brand, you create an additional positive feature associated with your brand in the reader’s mind. (*“I took that Searle High Blood Pressure test in newspaper. Lucky I did. Doctor says this new medicine got it under control. I’m sure glad that test was there.”*)

18) **Give them a Reward for their Time.** Ads like those mentioned above give readers a reward for taking the time to read the seller’s ad -- useful information. **People enjoy these ads and will read them because they are perceived to be of higher value.** That is, the reader gains some value (personal information) from the time spent reading the ad, even if the product is of no interest. Consumers are adept at quickly assigning a perceived value to any activity they consider doing, from looking at an ad to helping a person change a tire. We do this because one of our scarcest commodities is time. Most people don’t have enough time in a day. They certainly don’t want to waste any of it on an ad or activity that doesn’t give them some reward, some value, whether real or potential.

Value is a wide-ranging idea in most consumers’ minds. When they glance at a new ad, its perceived value may come from learning about the product (*“I’m buying a car, so I’ll see what the new Fords are like*”), about the offer (“*Charmin is on sale, two-for-one*”), about the information contained in the ad (*“I should know these Six Warning Signs of Cancer*”), about the ad itself (*“Wow, what a beautiful picture of a sunset*”), or even the talent in your ad (“*Is that guy a hunk*!”). **Don’t limit your vision about what value you can offer a reader in exchange for his/her time.** Anything which satisfies some motivation of the reader, a need, want, fear or desire, can be used.

It is important that the “reward” is closely tied to your product, and that it doesn’t cause the reader to ignore your message. The “reward” of sexual stimulation is a good example. A man will more frequently notice an ad with a beautiful girl in it, and look at it longer than he would if the girl were plain, or not present. Why? The girl’s beauty stimulates a part of his brain that handles sexual desire, creating a daydream about being with the girl in the ad. That feeling is valuable to him. It is his “reward” for looking at the ad.

One famous psychological study found that a male monkey with an electrode implanted into the hypothalamus gland in his brain -- the site of sexual stimulation -- would forgo food and water in order to keep playing a game which resulted in an electric jolt to the part of the brain that aroused his desire for sex. In short, the value to the

monkey in winning the game had nothing to do with the game, only the unrelated reward it gave him. The same results were not achieved with female monkeys. Remember the monkey when you're creating the added value in your ad. Don't "shoot yourself in the foot" by selecting a reward that will distract readers from your message.

19) **Present a numbered list**. People love lists, especially lists ranking something -- baseball players, top movie stars, biggest states, even silly lists like shortest stories or longest time kissing a car. Lists attract people. Just seeing that string of numbers down the page, 1. 2. 3. 4. grabs our eyes. The Guinness people have made a fortune on our infatuation with lists.

Lists may either be ranked or non-ranked, numbered or not. Non-ranked lists don't suggest any one item on the list is better than another. ("*Ten Great Bulbs to Plant This Spring." "Five Ways to Talk to Your Spouse*.") In this case, the reader is implicitly told that the list contains the best selection, in random order, but those left off the list aren't as good a choice as those on the list.


6 Mistakes to Avoid When Moving to a Larger Home

11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection

If you have a product or service which is not well known, then publishing a list in which your company's name appears with those of other, well-known companies gives your company some status because of its companions on the list. For example, *"10 Companies That Treat Customers Like Kings."* Of course, if the list was prepared by an independent entity, all the better. These sort of lists can be effectively used in advertising the company by pointing out its select ranking among its competitors -- "*Harvey's Motor Company Ranked in Top Ten*." Sometimes it isn't even necessary to emphasize Top Ten What?, or even who did the survey. When people see a company has that "Top Ten" designation, its status goes up.

Ranked lists are usually more fun, and create more talk. For example, a film society released their list of "*The 100 Greatest Films Ever Made*," soon followed by another list, *"The 100 Greatest Novels Ever Written.*" Readers seeing the words "*100 Greatest*" were immediately intrigued. Both lists spawned hundreds of (free) press stories, op-ed pieces, letters-to-the-editor, and themes for radio and TV talk shows. It also generated thousands of water cooler debates nationwide.

The same thing happened when Sports Illustrated released the list of their *"100 Greatest Athletes of the Century*" and the Sporting News issued its *"Top 100 Baseball Players of the Century."* People just naturally want to see if they agree or disagree with the selections. (*"How can they pick Willy Mays over Mickey Mantle!*") Whether its the

"100 Greatest Thoroughbreds of the Century," the "*100 Best Ski Resorts*," or the *"Top Ten Auto Repair Shops,"* many people will stop and look at the ad just to see who won, who is the best.

America is a nation of competitors, both men and women. We like to keep track of winners and losers, of what's "in" and what's "out," of who's rising and who's falling. **Lists give us a quick way of finding out the winners,** while giving us the opportunity to disagree with the selection. (*"Citizen Kane is the Best Movie?! Bunk! Those guys never saw Old Yeller!*") Lists relevant to our interest are perceived as having very high value to us. We'll even cut out such lists to save for future reference. Even lists which aren't exactly on target can grab the reader's attention. (*"Hey, look, the Guinness Book of Records says some guy did 124 push-ups in a row on one finger!"*) In fact, one good use of lists is to amaze people or make them laugh.

Even the concept of numbering gives weight and interest to the items. When David Letterman does his "Top Ten" lists, the audience expects each item to be funnier than the last, until Letterman reaches #1, which is weighed down with high expectations, and often falls flat because it wasn't up to the inflated hopes of the audience. (Fans sometimes experience this same feeling when they meet a singer or film star in person. Often they are surprised that the star is short or has love handles or looks old in person.)

Anything or anyone which is designated as #1 or "a star" or "In the Top Ten" has high expectations created for them simply by their ranking. That is a very useful piece of information to remember because it opens up some interesting marketing opportunities.

If your product is not well known, one helpful marketing technique is to test it against some brand name competitors. Use un-biased people to conduct the test and to take it. Cover up the names of all the products, and let people try them all out. If your product rates high, then you could create a list of the results, with a headline like "*Top Five Pizzas in Town -- Vinnie's #1. Better Than Dominos!*" Even if you're second or third, you've created a list which has attracted readers, and has "proven" to them that people like your pizza more than some name brands. You now have some status and ranking in the minds of your potential customers -- Vinnie's Pizza, ranked between Godfather's and Domino's. *"Hey, that's pretty good. Let's give Vinnie's a try."*

20) **Use a large percentage number**. This technique is most commonly used in clothing sale ads -- "*75% Off Sale*!" Most people like to get a bargain -- sometimes they'll buy a product they don't really need just because it was such a bargain! Large percentage-off numbers excite this bargain-seeking impulse in us. "*Wow! 75% off? It Must be a Bargain*!" Unscrupulous stores use this weakness in people by marking merchandise up 500%, then advertising "*Everything Must Go!!. All Items 80% Off*!!"

People are now so accustomed to sales that small numbers don't do much to attract their interest. One department store marketer said, "When we offer a 10% off sale, most people just say 'so what?'" If you can't legitimately use a big number, don't bother using a small number in your headline. There are other approaches to attracting attention that will work far better.

Don’t use such unethical sales tactics -- they’ll come back to haunt you. But if you can offer products or services at a big markdown, by all means trumpet it in your headline -- it will attract attention. You can also use the phrase “*Up To”* for large, but variable savings.

The same technique is often employed when advertising products or services which can help readers make money. “*Double Your Salary*!!” is a typical ad headline. Be careful about the claims you make in a headline. There are laws against deceptive advertising. More importantly, your ad is a way to talk to your potential customers. Lying in an ad is no more ethical than lying to a person’s face.

21) **Use a big dollar number**. “*You Are A $1,000,000 Winner!!!*” has stopped most every adult in America on their way back from the mailbox. Ed McMahon has broken more hearts than all the world’s sexy stars combined. Come-on headlines like *“Make a $1,000 a Week At Home in Your Spare Time!!!*” and *“Make $100 per Hour!”* attracts job seekers, even if they don’t believe the headline. Appealing to your readers’ desires is a powerful approach in a headline.

If you can legitimately use an impressive dollar figure in your headline, consider doing so -- *“EarthCom Cellular Saves You Up To $5,000 a Month in Wasted Calls!*” Use numbers (*$5,000,000*), not the words (“*five million*”) when listing the amount to make the headline stronger. That’s the same principle behind showing a picture of money in which readers can see the face on the bills, not just stacks of bills -- it creates greater attention and interest.

22) **Use a very small number to suggest value pricing**. If the cost of your product or service may be expressed by some very small number, consider using it. For example, “*Would You Spend a Nickel to Reach Your Next Customer?”* suggests a bargain for that mail service. “*Feed This Orphan for 24-cents a Day*” seems so insignificant that only a heartless person would not help. *“You Can Drive This Luxury Cadillac for As Little As $9.00 a Day*!” sounds like an amazing deal, too good not to check out.

There are often perfectly legitimate ways in which you can express the cost of your product or service in a similar manner. If you can create an initial impression in the reader’s mind that you are offering real value, they will be inclined to read on, which is the main job of a headline.

23) **Give Something Away**. The word **“Free!”** is one of the very best “stoppers” in your arsenal. People love to get something for free, even if it isn’t worth much. Some banks have little dog biscuits at the drive-through stations so tellers can include a biscuit with the deposit slip for their customer’s dog. Even such an insignificant gift, one not even for the owner, builds a positive impression of the bank as “caring people.”

“Free” offers are often used in conjunction with a purchase -- “***Free Dinner****!! when you buy another at our regular price.” “Buy Dinner and Desert Is On Us!*” Other

techniques include a free gift for buying a product -- *"Buy any Lancôme product this weekend and receive a Free Tote Bag, a $40 Value."* [**Note that putting a value on your gift can enhance it's worth to readers** -- "*Gosh, a $40 Tote Bag? That must be some great bag! And I can get it for the price of a $20 bottle of hand lotion! What a deal!*"]

One of the most successful uses of the "free" tactic is used each year in New York. It's a "*Tax Free Day.*" Ads shout that if you buy our merchandise today, you won't pay any tax on it. A department store manager in New York said, *"It's amazing. They flood into the stores. They're only saving about 8% off the list price. But the Tax Free gimmick sells a lot more goods than any '10% Off' sale we've ever had."* Why? Because Free is better than Discount. And it makes customers secretly feel good that they're somehow cheating the government.

"Free" offers may also be for services -- "*Buy a set of Tommy Armour golf clubs and get a free lesson."* Banks may offer free checking, mail order companies may offer free shipping, and attorneys may offer a free initial consultation. In these and other giveaway situation, the freebies help convince potential buyers they are getting good value for their money.

Whether you give away services or products, more readers will stop to review your offer when "Free" is in your headline. Make it Big, make it **Bold**, make it Stand Out! "Free" is still the all-time king of attention-getting words.

24) **Make an Odd Statement**. We all have a view of our world, and try to make everything we're exposed to fit within that viewpoint. When many common people thought the world was flat, they tried to fit what they saw into that viewpoint. One of the most effective arguments for a round earth came from the observation that when a ship first came into view, the top of its mast was seen first, and only later did the sails and hull gradually appear. Flat earthers could not make sense of that observation in their view of a flat world, but it made perfect sense for a round world.

Statements which clearly don't fit into our world view will often stop us cold. We want our world to make sense. And we'll exert some effort to make it so. For example, an ad for Merrill Lynch read "*The World is 10 Years Old."* The ad stopped readers, who then read the copy in order to make the headline fit into their world view. The body copy explained that the new global economy began after the Berlin Wall fell 10 years ago. *Ah, now I understand how they can make that statement. It makes sense now, so I can turn the page.*

The headline statement should be brief and very clear. It should tie directly into the body copy, because people will be looking there for answers that will make the headline "fit." Once you've got their attention with the headline, your first paragraph must plant another hook to keep them reading. Otherwise, after they understand the headline, they'll just turn the page. For example, Mobil used the headline "*Two of the Safest Ships Ever Built"* under a picture showing one supertanker. Readers naturally wondered, "Where is the second ship?" The ad quickly explains that Mobil is helping to protect the

environment by transporting its oil in supertankers with double hulls that would have prevented most every oil spill in history.

25) **Make it personal**. We all love to read about ourselves, or even someone with the same name. Most of us long for Warhol's "15 minutes of fame." Headlines which seem to be about us will attract our attention, whether the ideas are positive or negative.

For example, an ad for ITT Life Insurance showed an illustration of an despondent man who had painted himself into a corner. The very bold headline read, "*YOUR WHOLE LIFE IS A MISTAKE*." The use of the second-person pronoun “you” forces us to look at the personal implications of the headline. (“*Is my whole life a mistake? Have I painted myself into a career corner? Boy, that’s the truth! I feel just like the guy in the picture. God, what can I do to get out?*”)

This and other similar negative feelings about ourselves are very common. Most everyone feels sad, lonely, guilty, embarrassed, frustrated, or fearful about parts of their life. Some examples of ad headlines playing off these emotions include: *"Are You Frustrated About Your Finances?"* "*How to Rid Yourself of Guilt*" and “*You Don’t Have To Be Lonely Tonight*.” In each case, the headline offers up a common negative emotion, stimulates a memory of that same feeling in the reader by using ‘You” or “Your,” then suggests the reader can be rid of this terrible feeling if only he/she will just ...give our product a try.

Product ads focusing on the buyer’s fears can be very effective, especially when the buyer might be insecure about his or her decisions (as many buyers often are.) For example, an ad for ties may begin with the headline, *"You Bought That Tie!?"* Then go on to show the reader how to match ties with shirts and suits. Since men mostly fear being embarrassed about fashion in front of women, your ad could gain additional appeal if it featured a woman giving the tips. For example, *“New York fashion model Shannon Myst says, ‘Want to know how I dress my men? Like this . . .’”* Shannon’s picture and the slight titillation of her statement help attract and hold male readers, and give an extra perceived value to the tips being offered.

Most people have a great fear of making a mistake that will embarrass them. Showing them how to avoid doing so can be a major selling point. That’s why people will often make the safe choice, even if it isn’t the one they really want to make. As one stockbroker said several years ago, "*No one was ever fired for buying IBM.*"

If your product IS the safe choice, use that fact by stimulating personal fear in the reader. “*How An Off-Brand Got Me Fired by My Wife*.” But if your product is new, different, unknown, or has a unique reputation, you should be aware of those fears, even play to them, while stimulating another primary fear, that of missing out. *“Yahoo. Amazon.com. Intel. Who knew them just 10 Years Ago? Those Who Bought Their Stock! And Next Year . . . MyToys.com?*” Either way, using personal fears is an effective way to grab attention with your headline.

In sum, you should spend as much time crafting your headline as you do writing the rest of your ad. It will nearly always be the most important component of your ad. If your headline, like the carnival barker, doesn’t pull them in the tent, then the most deathless prose is worth nothing, because your readers are off looking at the new car ad which began “*How You Can Get a New Cadillac Free*.” Now we turn to another critical part of most ads, the body copy.

Chapter Five:

HOW TO WRITE BODY COPY THAT SELLS YOUR STORY

Now we'll turn to the body copy, the guts of the ad, the place where you get to tell your story. Here’s the secret in a nutshell: To be a good copywriter, you must be like a good safari guide to your readers. Remember the duties of a good guide -- interest, explain, enlighten, and provide value to your guests. Make them happy they spent some time with you, and wouldn’t mind doing it again.

Many amateur ad writers press too hard when they begin to write their body copy, the guts of the ad. They sit there thinking, “I’ve got to tell the readers all the wonderful things about my product so they’ll buy it.” In approaching the task that way, they automatically put too much pressure on themselves. In fact, the purpose of your body copy is NOT to sell the reader on your product. **The purpose of body copy is to sell your message.** The only time when body copy has the primary role of selling is on e-commerce Internet sites and in catalogs for mail order products, things which cannot be directly pitched to the buyer in a one-on-one setting.

Most businesses have a several people involved in the overall selling process, including a floor sales staff. It is their job to actually sell the product. Asking a hundred or fewer words to do the entire job of selling the product is unrealistic, especially if the product is not cheaply priced.

Imagine that the sales process is like duck hunting, with the buyers as the ducks. As the advertising writer, your job is to blow the duck call, attracting the ducks and convincing them that they should halt their journey to check out this fine lake which your “duck” has discovered for them. Once your ad has them coming in, the sales hunters take over with their big guns -- personal one-to-one contact with each duck. The job of salespeople is to take those interested, prospective buyers in hand until they write the order. In general, people want to see, touch, and try out a product before they buy it, if possible.

If an ad convincingly sells its message, buyers will go check out the product or service, knowing they can leave if it isn’t what they want. Think about this: Haven’t you seen ads for new food products at the supermarket (for example, a new favorite of mine, spray butter), and said to yourself, *“I think I’ll look at that product when I’m in the store*?” You haven’t committed to buying, just to careful consideration. In getting you to make that commitment, the copywriter has earned her paycheck. The same is true of products

from cough medicine to Cadillacs. The ad for a new Cadillac may convince you to stop at a dealership, but few people make a decision to buy a Cadillac based only on an ad they read or see. You’re just part of the team, you don’t have to pull the wagon by yourself. Get them in the door or on the phone, and you’ve done your job well.

Catalogs and the HSN have the same job -- get the buyers to like the product enough to pick up the phone and ask to examine the product. These shoppers know they have a “money back guarantee,” so they’re taking no more risk (except the risk of inconvenience) than the shopper entering a automobile showroom -- and maybe less!

Here’s a little background and theory which you might find interesting, and should find useful in thinking about advertising copywriting.

For decades there have been two main schools of advertising theory on how to best persuade people. One was championed by Claude Hopkins, author of the tremendously influential book Scientific Advertising. Mr. Hopkins said an ad should tell the reader the “reasons why” to buy. The Hopkins School of copywriters -- of which there have been tens of thousands over the years -- focus on logical, sometimes detailed explanations of the features of the product or service. They write ads full of direct, factual copy and common sense. (They sound something like this: *“The new Cadillac is our best value in years. From its powerful V-8 engine and Global Positioning system to its Bose stereo system and fine leather seats, the new DeVille is truly your best buy in fine automobiles.”)*

As you can guess, the underlying assumption of the Hopkins’ “Scientific/Logical School” is that buyers already know what they want, and why they want it. It is the job of the ad to tell them that you’ve got it. Mr. Hopkins and many others did that successfully for hundreds of household products from soap to nuts. While they had many “logical” campaigns fail, or not perform up to expectations, they also helped move billions of dollars in product.

The second approach to copywriting is just the opposite. It focuses more on emotions than facts. Among its many champions was William McMannus, who said that “*an ad should create a feeling about the product and the brand which made people want to have it*.” Travel ads are good examples. Often they only show lovers strolling along the white sand beach, the waves lapping at their bare feet, laughing as they end another perfect day in Paradise. What else does the reader need? Just the name of the place and a phone number to call.

While you could argue that the picture was the visual equivalent of factual copywriting (“Jamaica has the ocean, white sand beaches, swaying palm trees and secluded coves for lovers to stroll”), it seems to me that the purpose of the picture is not to visually inform, but to seduce the reader, to make him/her moan with unfulfilled desire. (“*Oh, God, that’s so beautiful. Bob and I have just got to go! I can’t wait to have him alone on that beach!”*)

While the famed Leo Burnett agency in Chicago created ads with both kinds of approaches, one of its most famous creations was pure emotion: The Marlboro Man. That one character created an emotional response in millions of young men (*“Now that’s*

a Man -- tough, rugged, won’t take crap from no one. That’s what I want to be. And I guess I can start by smoking the same cigarette he does.”) Mr. Burnett was fond of saying, *“There is an inherent drama in every product. It’s our job to dig for it, and capitalize on it.”* That is still some of the best advice ever given about advertising.

Some scholars have said the Hopkins approach works best on cheap, disposable products, while the emotional approach works best for high ticket items. This too-convenient division ignores the fact that the same people buy both types of products. One cannot assume they are logical about their soap purchases, but governed by their emotions when buying a car.

In fact, I believe the same categories of motivators are always present in any buying situation, with relatively more or less weight. Some motivators, often in the “need” category, are based in logic. Others, like those in the “desire” category, can be based on an emotional reaction to the product (like seeing a new Jaguar or Corvette pull up next to you at the light, where you just stare and drool until the light changes -- pure emotional desire to POSSESS that car!)

You can sell soap or cars on facts (“reasons why”) alone, or emotions alone. You can offer what marketing books call the Unique Selling Points (*“The new Tide is the ONLY detergent that will kill 99.8% of all bacteria on your clothes.”)* But the most powerful ads recognize that neither approach is always right. If the buyer’s strongest motivations are emotional (*“I have just got to get Harry to ask me for a date!”*), then the emotional approach should take the lead. But if the buyer’s strongest motivators are logical *(“I’ve got to have a car I can afford and won’t break my wallet to gas up.”)*, then the Hopkins approach should take the lead.

The most effective ads stimulate and promise to satisfy both logical and emotional motivations. The copywriter recognizes that most readers are a complex nest of needs, wants, fears and desires, and that they will, logically, try to get the greatest overall level of satisfaction possible. In short, the Motivation School says, *“First find out what kind of animals are pulling the wagon before you set out the feed.”*

As you can see, the Psychological Advertising approach requires both schools of thought. Many of the buyers’ needs, wants, fears and desires are clear to them -- they want a fast-acting headache pill, a shirt that won’t shrink, and a cake mix that’s easy to make. You can bet they’ll be looking for the facts that answer those motivations when they read your ad. (I just read a mailer sent by the city’s major cable operator, which is now offering very fast Internet access. While the stories of what I could do on-line were compelling, I hunted for the facts about what it would cost for the modem, service, installation cost, etc. -- all normal information a reasonable person would want before making a several hundred dollar commitment. I found some answers buried in the small print, but not others. The episode was frustrating, which reflected back on the company and its image in my mind.)

Psychological Advertising recognizes that people are neither robots or gullible idiots (although that is not a universal truth). People respond logically and emotionally. Often we don’t recognize, or are aware of, the basis for our emotional reaction. (Haven’t

you ever heard a song or saw something which just stopped you dead in your tracks, your heart beating faster, your eyes swelling with tears -- but you didn't know why?) It's buried in your subconscious memories, out of sight, but not out of mind. People want to feel special, to be loved and appreciated, to do good work and receive credit for it, to dream great dreams and hear the crowd roar for them just once, to feel happy and secure, sexy and proud, and to wake up in the morning and feel it is going to be a good day. Words that stimulate and promise to make those emotional motivations come true are every bit as powerful in a successful ad as the facts about the product's unique features. The following techniques are a blend of the logical and emotional approaches to copywriting, folded together into the Psychological Approach.

THEORY INTO PRACTICE:

Your body copy has two jobs: (1) Interest readers so they will want to look at the product in person. (2) Help them remember the product's name and why they liked it. The first one is obvious enough. The second reason bears more explanation. Researchers often find that people will remember an advertisement, but be unable to remember which product or brand of product it advertised! That's money down the drain -- or worse, since they may buy a competing product.

What are some techniques for writing good body copy which will make readers respond? Here are some of the best:

1) **Give your first paragraph impact**. Just as the advertisement is only one of several steps moving the buyer toward making a purchase, so an ad is composed of a series of steps leading toward its ultimate goal -- selling its message. **The job of each "step" in the ad is to move the reader to the next step in the process, all the while enhancing the product's image and providing more reasons to say "Yes.".** If it is successful, the ad will motivate the reader to examine the product or service firsthand. In step one, the headline and/or picture stop readers by attracting their attention. In step two they convey a message that entices readers to look at the ad's message. In step three, the first paragraph of the body copy must lure the reader deeper into the text where the pitch is waiting to be released.

To entice the reader, the design of your first paragraph should more closely resemble your headline than the rest of the text. **The first sentences should stimulate, then promise to deliver excitement, interest, amazement, romance, power, wealth, etc. -- in other words, promise to satisfy one or more of the readers' needs, wants, fears, or desires.**

For example, a lead paragraph which begins with the sentence, *"New Niagara soap has been reformulated to include aloe vera and moisturizers*," is just a factual statement. If the reader is interested in aloe or moisturizers, or will immediately realize how important they might be for softer skin, then the sentence may encourage those

readers to go on. But for most readers the stronger headline will stimulate their true, hidden motivation for buying and using aloe and moisturizers, and do it with the impact of a cattle prod.

"'*Darling, your skin is incredible*,' said Jim, drawing her close. [Do you see the difference? The woman is immediately pulled into a desired situation -- the romantic words and embrace of her man. The reader thinks, ‘*Whoa! That’s what I want! How did she get him to do that!?’* Wondering, she reads the second line.]

'*It's my Niagara secret*,' she whispered, putting her soft arms around his neck and kissing him." [Now she’s hooked. Romance like this can be hand for the price of some face creme! She wants to know more, and also see what happens next. So she reads your pitch. Success.]

The first example is just reporting, the second is mental images in a swirl of emotions. The first informs, the second promises the fulfillment of a desire. The first bores, the second seduces.

To really make the ad satisfying, you should close with a line or two about the lovers. It gives a “bookend” structure to the ad, giving the reader a sense of having witnessed a complete event. What do you say? It can’t be more of the same. It has to move the story into the next phase, one that is highly desirable. In other words, you wouldn’t want to close with *“Grab your coat, honey. I’m going to buy you the best dishwasher in this town.!”* While it shows Jim wants to make his wife happy, he isn’t moving in the direction which our reader wants. It creates a let-down, and that will be part of her memory of your brand. In other words, hint that the story finishes like the reader would want it to.

You’ll read many ideas for ways to design your first paragraph as you read the rest of these techniques. Keep in mind a few guidelines (not “rules”) as you write or edit your opening lines.

(a) Use words with emotional associations for your readers to help create an emotional reaction. For example, “*Kiss*” is a word with good emotional associations. “*Dishwasher”* is not.

(b) Use short, common words. Don’t make the reader reach for the meaning of any word or of the paragraph. If they don’t understand what you’re trying to say, even for an instant, it’s hard to get them involved in your ad.

(c) Don’t be coy. If you’re trying to create a romantic tone, use words that immediately convey romance. Don’t make the reader guess at the situation. It’s easier to stimulate a motivation if the reader is put in the situation and with the people where that motivation may be the strongest. Want to stimulate a fear motivation of making the wrong choice in an office copier? Start your ad by putting the reader at his office, with his boss walking down the hall. It’s a situation he can immediately picture, complete with images and emotions. Now put him into a worried frame of mind as he peers out his office door. *“I wonder if he’ll notice it isn’t a Canon Copier? I’ll tell him it was cheaper. He’ll buy that. Right?”*

(d) Make it interesting. Make the reader want to read the next line. Ask yourself if the last line draws the reader to the next line. If not, then fix it.

(e) Keep it short. No more than a few short sentences. Don’t scare the reader off by the size of the first block of type.

(f) Stimulate at least one motivation -- this is a KEY, so don’t forget it. The types of motivation are needs, wants, fears and desires. But within each type are many specific motivations, such as love, security, romance, greed, anger, and so on (notice how many of them have names of emotions?).

Be sure your words stimulate the specific motivator which you’ve decided is best satisfied by your product. If you think people will buy your automobile because of its family safety features, draping a bikini-clad blond over it is not the right approach! Doing that just creates COMPETING motivations. You want to create motivations which play off each other, each making the others stronger.

For example, if the primary motivation you’re shooting to stimulate is “family safety,” then supporting emotions could be “love,” “guilt,” “fear,” “satisfaction,” and so on. Here’s how it might read: *“Your family depends on you to keep them safe, even in the car you drive. It’s dangerous out there. Stories are on the news every night. The little “sardine cans” just aren’t strong enough. Isn’t there some way to keep them safe on the highway?”*

Here we’ve stimulated several coordinated motivations to stimulate the desire for a car which is safe. First, the reader is reminded that he/she has an obligation to keep their family safe, and that obligation extends to the car the reader puts them in. Having gotten the reader to picture his/her family in a car, the next line stimulates fear that something bad could happen to them “out there,” then reminds the reader about the nightly car wrecks shown on the news, while stimulating some strong visual images of car wrecks. This sentence also serves as a confirmation of the premise that the highways are dangerous, and should be one of the reader’s primary concerns in buying a car. Then the competing class of small cars and cheap cars are positioned as “sardine can” death traps -- who in their right mind would put their children in one of those!? This idea sets up the feeling of guilt if the reader should seriously think about a small car. Finally, the desire motivation is raised, the common “Oh, my, what shall I do?” motivation for feeling secure. And that leads into the second paragraph where the ad explains how big, strong, sturdy, solid Cadillacs are among the top performers in independent crash tests.

You’ll note that all these motivations, and all the emotions we’ve targeted, are specific for the main feature of the product we’ve selected. Why? Because we knew this particular target group of buyers could be swayed by playing the “family safety” card. Other ads, targeted at other target buyers, would use a different set of motivations and emotions because those buyers can be swayed by playing a different card, like “status,” or “cool,” or “value.” It all begins with the buyer, because buying first takes place inside his head.

Keep in mind that you aren’t going to sweep them up to the emotional heights of “Gone With the Wind” or even “ER.” It’s just a mild arousal of emotions, closer to

watching a rerun of “Seinfeld.” But in a world of so much uninteresting print advertising, that’s enough to make your ad stand out, and keep them reading.

g) Use the “active voice” whenever possible in your sentence construction -- people are doing things (“John drove the car”, not “The car was driven by John.” Also, if possible, use the present tense -- things should be happening now, not in the past. (“John pulls into a parking place and bounds up the stairs to his office.”, not “John parked the car and bounded up the stairs to his office.” You see how the first sentence just seems more lively and interesting? Of course, you’ll find times when the present tense just doesn’t “sound right.” Trust your ear. Present tense and active voice will help give your sentences action and immediacy. Remember, you must continue to seduce readers in this paragraph so they will read further. Show them a boring first paragraph and they’re gone. Get them involved. Put them in a situation they recognize, with emotions and motivations that trigger memories. Show them the “gaping pit of hell” and the “sweet wonder of Heaven,” then explain in the next paragraph how avoid the first and attain the second.

2) **Tell a story**. People love stories, especially when they are about ordinary people -- like them -- who must overcome an obstacle, or about the rich and famous, who they envy and secretly are fascinated with. Readers’ Digest did this every month for decades in its “*My Most Unforgettable Character”* and “*True Life Adventure”* articles. People can tell you about the fireman or the nurse or the house painter years after their stories were printed. Stories are a slice of life, which can create a very strong, rich memory trace in our brain.

To learn how to tell a story in an advertisement, look at books on writing fiction. They will tell you there are three parts to a story, no matter how short:

(1) The introduction in which the people and their problem are introduced. (*“John and Mary fought constantly*.”)

(2) The middle in which everything goes wrong, leaving the hero/heroine in despair. (“*John cursed Mary and stormed out.*”)

(3) The conclusion in which the problem is resolved or ended. Often the hero/heroine overcomes adversity to triumph, but not always. (*“As Mary watched from the window, John pulled out, right into the path of a speeding truck. Mary screamed for a long time.*”)

This three-part (or three act) design is the story structure which seems to be the most satisfying to readers. It has been popular since Homer used it in The Odyssey, and probably long before that. The structure allows us to get acquainted with the people in the story, share in their disappointments, and be happy about their final triumph. Again, we’re not talking about “Gone With the Wind” involvement with Rhett and Scarlet, just mild interest and involvement with characters who seem like real people.

Why on earth should we care about fictional characters named “John” and “Mary” introduced to us two dozen words? Because. . . (1) We know it’s going to be a story -- and we love stories (maybe it reminds us of when we were four and mommy sat on our

bed holding a book and began, “Once Upon A Time...’”). (2) We all like to hear stories about people who triumph over circumstances, who win over the odds, who really do make a success out of failure. It gives those of us living in the real world a tissue of hope that our lives may creep out of the shade.

Whatever the real reason, just remember, body copy in a story form can be riveting. One of the print ads rated by advertising professionals among the top five of all time is a story ad titled *“Somewhere West of Laramie*.” Even the title sounds promising.

When using the Story technique, its advisable to have a likeable hero/heroine. The reader needs to like the people in the story in order to care about them. If you don’t have a likable hero/heroine, the reader will not identify with him/her, and will therefore not be “sucked into” the story. The best way to suck them into the story is to create a situation where the people you like are going to have something bad happen to them -- from an overflowing toilet to a pink slip. If the problem is caused by a person, all the better. A strong antagonist (the person or thing causing the problems) gives the reader someone to root against. (“John was grinning from ear to ear as he read the Snoopy card from his new bride. [He’s smiling, and who couldn’t have a warm spot for newly weds?] Suddenly, his office door slammed open and his boss stormed in.” [Crude and boorish behavior is a sure sign of an antagonist.] (Even those two sentences hooked you, didn’t they? You sort of want to know why John’s boss was mad, and whether John is going to get out of it. See the power of a story format?)

Remember -- if you don’t have a likable central character who has some problem to solve, you don’t have an effective marketing story (unless you’re the next Hemingway or Faulkner.)

You can use this story structure in ads for most types of products and services. For example, if your product is a stain remover, your print ad’s body copy (in the three-act story form) could go like this (add comic strip cartoons and increase readership! People will appreciate the visuals that go with your story, and they will also help to attract readers’ attention as they turn through the magazine.)

ACT I: "*Mom,*" said Julie. "*I've got a date with Brian that's really important. Could I borrow your antique white blouse?*"

"*Antique!,*" said her mom. *"I wore it on my first date with your father. I'm wearing it tomorrow night for our anniversary. It's very special to me, Julie. Please wear something else.*"

Julie smiles. "*Sure, mom. I'd die if I damaged it.*"

That night, Julie tore through her closet, discarding every blouse she owned. *"The antique one,"* a voice kept saying. "*She'll never know. No harm done*." Just then her father called, "*Brian's here*." Julie panicked. She had to look perfect for Brian! She rushed to her mother's room, grabbed the blouse, quickly buttoned it and tiptoed down the stairs, pulling on her coat to hide her guilt, and her mother’s antique blouse.

ACT II: At the dance, Brian said, "*Julie, you look incredible. I, uh, well, Julie, would you go steady with me?*"

Julie nearly swooned. "*Yes*," she said softly.

"*Great*," said Brian, slipping his class ring on her finger. "*Let's celebrate. Have some punch*." He held out a cup of strawberry punch just as Julie raised her hand to admire the ring. The ring struck the cup, spilling red punch all over her mother's blouse.

"*No*!" screamed Julie. Everyone turned as she rushed out the door.

ACT III:. Julie rushed down the steps just as Mrs. Alexander, her science teacher got out of her car.

"*Julie, what's wrong*?"

"*Oh, Mrs. Alexander, I've ruined my mother's antique blouse. I'll never get the stain out!"*

Mrs. Alexander smiled. "*Don't worry Julie. Come with me.*" They drove to Mrs. Alexander's apartment. In the laundry room Mrs. Alexander reached for her green bottle of **StainOutNow**. "*Put this on the stain, Julie, and wash it in warm water*."

"*OK, but I know it's ruined!"* sobbed Julie.

Minutes later Julie rushed into the living room holding the blouse. "*Look, look! The stain is all gone. It's a miracle,*" she cried. "*Thank you*."

"*It's no miracle, Julie. StainOutNow has special ingredients that scientists at Dow Chemical developed to pull out the worst stains -- even grass, tar, and blood. For **StainOutNow**, that punch was a piece of cake*."

Julie's mom was waiting for her at the door. Julie apologized for borrowing the blouse, and explained what had happened. Her mom looked closely at the blouse in amazement. "*Why, there's not even a hint of punch. What's that product, Julie?"*

"StainOutNow," said Julie.

"*Well, I'm getting some tomorrow*." She hugged Julie. "*Why don't you come with me to the store?*" she asked. "*We'll turn StainOutNow loose on that oily, old sweatshirt your dad loves."* CURTAIN.

The StainOutNow “story” ad is effective because you like the characters, sympathize with Julie (who hasn't done something similar as a teenager?), identify with that type of situation, and are happy that she is victorious (over the stain and her probably grounding.) We like the product -- StainOutNow -- that has helped the person we like.

In addition, the story has created a visual “movie” in our minds, and we have “seen” how the product got out a bad punch stain. Finally, we've heard from Mrs. Alexander about the scientific ingredients of StainOutNow. Taken together, these reasons and the positive image of the product as a “life saver” are enough to convince many readers to look for StainOutNow the next time they're in Safeway.

Your story doesn't have to be this elaborate or long. What readers want is some sort of narrative that will keep their attention. The entertainment they get from the story is their “payoff” for giving you their time and attention.

Here’s a good real-life, real-ad example of this story technique: A print ad for Zippo lighters in several Men’s magazines told the story of how a fish swallowed a Classic Zippo dropped by a fisherman; years later when the fish was caught, the Zippo was found -- and it still worked! The owner’s name was found on the lighter and it was returned to him with the story about its recovery. Readers loved that ad, and recalled it for years. It helped to sell a lot of lighters. Proof of the power of a good story.

With a little thought, you can turn a listing of your product's important attributes into a nice little story -- one that will help the reader remember your product far longer than any boring list could ever do. Perhaps you even know of a real life story that would be a great way to illustrate your product’s effectiveness. (“*How My Sears Snow Chains Saved a Town*”)

Here’s one way to begin your thinking process: Imagine that a thoroughly nice young man or woman rushes into your store and shouts, *“Hurry, I need one of your ___.”* As you play with the continuation of this story in your mind, you’ll begin to grasp the ways in which your product or service can be a “hero” in a story. When you’re done writing a story ad you like, ask yourself this question: *“Is my product (service) the hero of the story? Does it save the day? Is it the key element in helping the central character to triumph over adversity?*“ If the answer is no, start over. Remember, it is ALWAYS the cavalry that saves the settlers, never themselves.

3) **Stimulate cultural, national, or ethnic pride**. We all like to feel good about ourselves and the groups we belong to. Were all proud to be something -- Texans, Republicans, English, German, Japanese, American, Rotarians, college grads, Catholics, Rotarians, engineers, Hispanics, women, teenagers, or vegans, we all belong to some group we admire. Think of the pride each nation's people feel as they see their athletes march into an Olympic arena carrying their nation's flag. Stimulating that sort of pride and associating it with a product is another way of shining up the product’s image in the minds’ of that group of target buyers (“Made in America” “Savile Row” “Contains no animal products” “Teen Shop” etc.) One television commercial for a salsa made in San Antonio, Texas even used this technique in reverse by making viewers glad they weren’t from “*New York City?!!”*

For example, one bank targeting its business loan program to black entrepreneurs showed a series of ads featuring notable Black scientists, inventors and business people. The ads instilled pride in the reader for the accomplishments of others, while sending a strong message that the bank not only shared that pride, but also wanted to help others join those celebrated ranks.

You have to be careful about targeting your audience, however. One beer company tried to enhance its ethnic market share in New York City by showing ads of various ethnic groups enjoying their beer. While that was a positive strategy, the result

wasn't. All ethnic groups saw ads featuring other groups as well as their own. The reaction was predictable -- *"If those *#$!!& drink that beer, I'm sure not going to!*" Remember, target marketing means just that -- hit your mark, not all marks.

The Levy's Jewish Bread company ran a similar set of ads showing Indians, Chinese, Latinos, etc. eating the bread. The headline read "*You Don't Have to be Jewish to Love Levy's*." Humor and the bread's existing identification with an ethnic group helped make the campaign work.

Sometimes ads include an ethnic slant which are not meant to stimulate pride. Those ads can backfire, even with careful planning. For example, Fritos used a cartoon character called the Frito Bandito in its ads. Hispanics complained that the Bandito character reinforced the negative image others have of Hispanics (or Latinos). When Taco Bell recently created several ad campaigns featuring a Chihuahua who speaks Spanish ("*Yo Quiro Taco Bell"* is now the only Spanish large numbers of Americans know), complaints were again heard. But the ads didn't create the same outrage because the dog is not a bandit or even a bone stealer. He's cute, funny and takes pride in his nationality. In fact, the Taco Bell campaign single-handedly turned around the image and fortunes of that chain, making a low-end restaurant suddenly popular with young Americans. Make sure you think about the negative reactions which large numbers of people could have to your approach.

4) **Relate your product to a positive symbol**. Remember in school how kids would hang around the most popular girls and guys, want to be seen with them in the hall, cruising the streets, or at the movies? Part of that "be with me" frenzy was a self-marketing strategy: If people saw you with a popular guy, then Q.E.D. you must be popular, too. A carry-over of this idea is seen in "groupies" who try desperately to be with rock stars, no matter how repulsive their looks, because some of their fame will "rub off" on the groupie, giving her a higher status among her friends. (*"Oh, my God, did you hear that Jennie did One Eyed Dingo last night!? Talk about lucky. All I got was his roadie in the equipment truck.")*

Many businesses and professions market themselves by creating associations with people and objects which have become positive symbols in our culture. For example, politicians stand in front of a big American flag in hopes the feelings of Patriotism which the American flag stimulates in many of us will carry over to them. "(*Shoot, Edna, a man standing in front of a flag that big sure must love the old U.S. of A.")* The law firm of Goldberg & Osborne wraps its corporate image around the American bald eagle. *("Look at that big old eagle, Harry. Those boys must be a damn tough bunch of lawyers. Give 'em a call."*) A mutual fund has named itself after, and uses the picture of, Benjamin Franklin. The names of other great Americans, such as Washington and Lincoln, have been appropriated by thousands of companies to help instill trust in an unknown or otherwise impersonal institution. *("Washington National Bank. Now that sounds pretty safe to me, Martha. Better'n that number bank, Fifth Third, First Second, something like that.")*

Other companies play the "green" card, trying to show how sensitive they are to the environment, or how fresh their product is. We see this technique in the image ads for power plants and strip mining companies which show animals grazing in a pristine green forest, drinking from a bubbling stream, while the announcer explains how the John Muir Nuclear Power Station over the hill is so environmentally sensitive that deer and antelope live in harmony with their new corporate neighbor. (Also see the “Greater Movement” tip below.)

Consider the strengths and weaknesses of your product or service. If one of your weaknesses is a bad image (lawyers, S&Ls, strip mining companies, etc.), then you may benefit from “wrapping yourself in the flag,” or any other positive symbol. While it makes more sense to pick a symbol that is somehow related to your product, it isn’t necessary (consider Paris Hams, the Dreyfus Fund lion, the Met Life Peanuts characters.) If you can link your product to a widely-known, widely-liked or respected image, it may be worth considering. But remember this -- if you wrap yourself in an image outside your control, and that image takes a nosedive, it takes you with it. For example, after President Reagan’s near assassination, and more recently the school shootings, companies with pictures of handguns as part of their logo suffered a negative reaction from customers as the emotions around those memories spilled over onto those who seemed to glorify handguns. It is often safer to pick an old, trusted symbol that has stood the test of time -- Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, the Oak Tree, the fishing pole, the spinning wheel, etc. Although even the oldest sometimes run onto hard times, like Columbus.

5) **Suggest professional results**. We would all like the results of our own projects to resemble those of professionals. This is true whether the project is cooking, woodworking, landscape painting, golf or sewing. Suggesting professional-looking results the buyer could get by using your product is another way to promote it.

We see this technique used in ads with headlines like “*Glidden Paint: Professional Results in a Can*” or “*Putt Like A Pro with Ping*.” If your product requires much skill to use, or to achieve good results, be sure to show a picture of the creation done by a professional -- a pie, bookshelf, flower garden, etc. Then promise that the easy directions will help readers achieve the same great pie, bookshelf, or garden.

Better Crocker always shows us a beautiful cake on the box and in the ads. This picture stimulates two motivations -- hunger *(“Boy, that looks good.*”) and two desires (“*I’ll bet the kids would love (me) that cake*” and *“I’d be so proud if it came out looking like that!”)* But the picture also creates a fear motivation, which an ordinary looking cake wouldn’t (“*If I screw it up, I’ll feel like a fool.*”) Fortunately, Betty anticipated this problem, because her promise that *“you only need to add eggs and milk*” is designed to get that box put in the shopping cart. (*“Well, shoot, any fool can crack a couple of eggs. So, all I have to do is put in the eggs and milk and cook it, and it will look like the picture. I can do that.”)*

Be honest with your customers. If they aren’t going to get results that are reasonably close to those you promise, then you’re no better than those carny acts that promise you a panda if you knock over three milk bottles, but don’t tell you the bottom two are made of lead.

6) **Wrap the product up in good feelings**. This is the classic approach for McDonald's TV ads. They always seem to feature a group of happy, laughing people -- a family, a group of friends, teens on a date -- having fun while eating a Big Mac and fries. The "backdoor" or subconscious message the ad sends is that eating at McDonald's is a warm, friendly experience, AND McDonald’s is a warm, friendly place where you can enjoy that feeling of family closeness (while enjoying a burger!) . If you want to understand the fundamentals of creating an ad which is rooted in this tip, study the TV ads (especially the older ones from 20 years ago) of McDonald’s, Kodak, Budweiser’s Christmas spots with the Clydesdales, even the legendary “I want to buy the world a Coke” spot. Yes, they are TV spots, not print ads, but unfortunately, the print ads of these companies are not nearly as good at portraying this tip.

You can’t just throw these ads together. Watching such ads is like watching a great basketball team score. It looks easy and even improvised, but each element in that play was carefully selected, integrated into the whole sequence, and practiced over and over. Anytime you decide to use Emotions, if you aren’t a professional, study examples of ads that achieve the emotional impact you want. Don’t forget to look at products sold exclusively through emotions, like perfume. Then practice assembling the elements, and write the ad over and over in different ways. Show the top ones to others. If they aren’t moved, you may need more practice, or even a different tip to use. If you can’t do this approach well, don’t do it. Readers don’t like advertisers to trifle with their emotions. So make your ad good enough that it doesn’t appear that way, like the music in an emotional film will add to the impact of a scene without calling attention to itself.

Tobacco companies have always relied on ads using this approach to convince viewers or readers how much fun it is to smoke, and how cool people always seem to be smoking or holding a cigarette. Probably the vast majority of smokers in this country began not because cigarettes tasted good, but to fit into the industry-created image that being cool meant smoking. Many males who have been smoking since they were young grew up thinking the coolest guys on the planet were Marlon Brando, James Dean, and the Marlboro Man. They consciously modeled their behavior after these role models, including heavy cigarette use. For forty years the tobacco companies invested a lot of money and time in product placement in Hollywood films. It seemed like every star lit at least one cigarette on screen, often when they were in romantic or stressful situations -- covert message: smoking makes you more attractive to the opposite sex, and will calm you down.

The Marlboro Man, which skyrocketed the sales of a flagging brand, became the personification of the cigarette’s qualities. Notice how this happened. It’s an important

lesson in psychological marketing. The cigarette didn’t change. None of its features changed. Here’s what did change: Previously, the company had been marketing the cigarette on the basis of its features and benefits -- fine blend, good taste, mild, and so on. All of these marketing points had a real, direct relations with cigarette. When the smoker pulled the lever for Marlboros, he knew that’s what he was buying. And in the noisy, competitive mix of cigarette advertising, it wasn’t working.

Here’s how it started to work. The advertisers stopped selling the cigarette’s features and benefits and started selling DESIRE. Remember this important category of buying motivations which consumers seek to satisfy by spending money? Look at the prime target audience -- pre-teen, teenage and 20's males, where they could be hooked early as a lifelong, repeat customer. What do teenage boys want? Not cigarettes. They want respect, pride, a strong self-image, and girls. Unfortunately, cigarettes don’t contain any of those features or benefits. *“Well, then we won’t sell them cigarettes. We’ll sell them what they WANT to buy -- we’ll make them feel like a handsome ‘John Wayne’ proto-male. Besides John, who has the most of these admired qualities? Soldiers? Football players? No, Cowboys!”*

Thus was born the rugged Marlboro Man. He was obviously fit, healthy, and a guy who wouldn’t take an insult from anybody. What an image to sell a teenage boy! The packaging also changed to a bold red and white in keeping with the bold American image of the company’s new symbol. And every ad, print or TV, focused on the image of this Man. He dominated the ads, not the copy promising a fine blend and good taste as the old ads had done. Did that image appeal to the targeted teenage market? Of course! There was little copy on the ads besides the name of the cigarette and the name of the man, the Marlboro Man. You didn’t need to tell boys and young men about special blends. They didn’t care, and had proven it by not buying Marlboros in the past. When a boy bought Marlboros, he wasn’t buying cigarettes, he was buying a feeling of Manhood. The cigarette was just the means to that end.

Ironically, several of the Marlboro Man models were heavy smokers who later died of lung cancer or other smoking-related diseases. But not before they hooked millions of pre-teen and teenage boys on smoking so they could look manly, too.

Short, but interesting digression which you can skip: There are certain cultural icons in any society. In America, we have icons like The Founding Fathers, The Girl Next Door, the Star Football Player, and The Cowboy, among many others. We long to have real people play these roles because they reaffirm our belief in the existence of these icons. The Marlboro Man worked in part because the image was in tune with the cherished Cowboy icon we have, an icon so powerful that it has taken root in many countries, including Japan, even though its origin is quintessential American.

Movie stars are a good place to look for examples (we also see them in books, and music.) Some actors become Mega Stars not because of their great acting skills, but because the public has collectively decided that this actor is a good fit for a treasured cultural icon. The Cowboy icon, with qualities like *strong, silent, honorable, protects women, true to his beliefs, goes his own way, and makes up his own mind*, has

been filled by numerous actors. Gary Cooper and later John Wayne were the personification of the Cowboy icon, and America took themto its heart because of it.

Why is this important? Because if you can recognize our cultural icons and learn their basic qualities, you can apply those qualities to your product, service, brand, or company, giving it a distinct advantage in the marketplace, just like Marlboro did.

The unstated, but clear, pitch in every Marlboro ad is just this -- *"Smoke Marlboros and This Could Be You.*" The advertisers had stopped selling cigarettes and started selling self-image, with Marlboros just the convenient means to that desired end. Using that psychological marketing strategy, the brand went to the top!

We see the same technique used in nearly every perfume ad -- the strong, handsome man holding the beautiful woman in a romantic setting. The picture (and its implied promise of *"This Could Be You!"*) triggered the woman reader's desire for a storybook romance, suggested that she could have it, and told her that their perfume could make it happen. When she goes into Macy's and asks for Paloma, she's not buying perfume, but a chance for romance. The perfume is just the lottery ticket.

Many other successful brands have ridden the Emotion Strategy to the top. **Ads like McDonald's and Kodak wrap their product and brand in feelings we all secretly desire -- the warm-fuzzy feelings of love, family, friends, happiness, and the joy of living**. Advertisers hope that viewers, like Pavlov's dogs, will associate those warm-fuzzies with the brand. Later, when you're ready to buy a burger, McDonald's enhanced emotional image may tip the decision scale for a Big Mac over a Whopper.

This isn't a conscious process for buyers. It's as subtle as that music in films. When you think of McDonald's, you open up a lot of verbal and non-verbal information stored in its mental "file folder" -- facts, ideas, experiences, both real and advertised, and Emotions. If you see enough repetitions of ads telling you that eating at McDonald's is a warm, friendly family experience (and you have no experiences to the contrary), it is likely that you'll hold that image of McDonalds -- even though it was only their commercials which told you so! Then, if a warm, friendly family eating experience is high on your list of desires, there's a good chance you'll look for a nearby McDonald's.

Yes, this is the same principle behind tobacco ads telling kids it is cool to smoke. There are six basic steps in creating and using this technique as a marketing tool:

A) Pick a set of emotions your target buyers would like to feel (e.g. family love, pride, fun, etc.), which you can reasonably tie to your product.

B) Find a visual image or series of images in which people are exhibiting these emotions (families laughing and playing together, a cowboy riding the range, etc.)

C) Create an ad which stimulates a certain positive feeling(s) in viewers, and a desire to experience those positive feelings again. (e.g. show a picture of kids and parents laughing and enjoying each other's company, and use emotion-laden words in the copy which will stimulate that desire even more, like "happy," "fun," and "together.")

D) Strongly associate that feeling with your product. (e.g. while they laugh, they're eating a Big Mac under the Golden Arches.) (If you were using video, a catchy song would add another powerful emotional dimension to the experience of the viewer.)

E) Repeat it to viewers enough times for the association to stick (as a rule of thumb, at least 20 impressions.) It doesn’t matter if the ad is exactly the same, as long as the underlying message is identical. In fact, it’s good to have several in order to keep attracting readers’ attention. Think of your ad as a suit of clothes, and your emotional product message as the person wearing the suit. The suit may change, but the wearer is the same.

F) Make sure your product or service does nothing to harm that strong, positive association between the emotion and your product (e.g. rude counter service, dirty tables, or long waits.) Unpleasant experiences which create feelings that are directly opposite of what the ads promise will quickly destroy any positive associations. When they see the ad again, their reaction won’t be “*awww*!,” but “*Yeah, right*!”

Finally, notice that this type of ad has little or nothing to do with the features of the product -- taste, trimmings, price, etc. **This is IMPORTANT! In “feeling” ads, don’t clutter up the ad with a lot of logical words about product features. That isn’t what you’re selling. This type of ad has only one job -- associate a brand name with a positive feeling.** You could put in a few simple, little words about features to provide logical reasons for the buyer to draw on AFTER the sale. *“Hey, Jack, why are you smoking those Marlboros?” “It’s that special blend of tobacco they use, Ned; makes ‘em taste mild. Ought to try ‘em.”* After all, Jack can’t very well say, *“‘Cause I want to look like a Real Man!”*

It takes a long time to build and hard work to maintain, but done properly these image ads are like money in the bank -- sustaining your product against the slings and arrows of competitors’ analytical advertising: “*So a Big Mac costs a little more, so what, Bob? We’ll have fun being together*, *and the kids love it. Besides, I read their food has lots of vitamins. Look, there’s the Golden Arches!”*

7) **Emphasize class**. We all have a rough idea which socio-economic class we think we belong in, and the class we want to be in. Those who see themselves in the lower classes want to move up to the middle class. Those in the middle class want the benefits of an upper class lifestyle. But they may not want to be called upper class. After all, the upper class has taken a terrific beating in the press since this country was founded. America is so egalitarian that it is considered snobbish to call yourself “upper class,” even if you are.

How do you use this technique? If you have a product which is targeted toward lower social class consumers, its a good idea to price it within reach of the lower class buyer, but emphasize its middle class use -- middle class is what they want to be. Consumers will be more inclined to buy it since its part of the middle class lifestyle they aspire to. For example, an ad for Wonder bread may show it being eaten by a family in a middle class setting. Or, a low-priced beer could be shown livening up a middle class party. The idea is simple -- if you want to be part of the middle class, you will want to use the products and services middle class people are using, at least on TV and in advertisements.

If you have a high-end product which is targeted toward middle class buyers, emphasize its use or ownership by the upper class (“*for those who demand the very best*”), but don't show it being used by the upper class (since many Americans have a hate-envy attitude toward the rich.) Thus ads may show a new, very expensive Cadillac driven by a happy middle class man or younger business woman; it should never show the car driven by a stereotypically snooty, upper class man or older “furred-and-jeweled” woman (unless you are advertising in a society magazine, or you’re selling a competing automobile and wish to heap some emotional negatives on Cadillac by suggesting that only snooty, dull people drive that car.)

Of course, there are exceptions to every guideline. Grey Poupon mustard, for example, built its reputation as a high-priced mustard for middle class consumers by showing TV ads featuring a snob preparing to eat a sandwich in one limo asking a rich Frenchman in another limo if he had any Grey Poupon. “But, of course,” replied the Frenchman and handed it over.

Other ways to play the “class” card effectively are to emphasize the product’s incredible design or workmanship, its uniqueness, its prestige, its European roots, or its “old money” image. (You’ll notice some of these are in the “reason why” approach, others are in the “image” approach. But all are in the “psychological marketing” approach.) For example, a full page ad for a beautiful $100,000 jeweled ring simply showed a close-up of the ring, with the headline, “*Wear Art.”* An expensive European watch ad showed a close-up of the inner workings of the watch, with the headline, “*Trusted by European royalty since 1731.”* A cigar ad showed two cigars with the headline “*Only the Best Survive*.”

8) **Explain “How To” do a task**. America is a nation of doers. From fixing cars and screen doors to fixing our health and business plans, we like to do things, and do them pretty well. **Ads which promise information about how to do something get attention and readership.** Even if we don't need it now, we may need to know how to do it later. Millions of families have an ad for a soap powder on the laundry room wall because it shows how to get ten common stains out of clothing. Often the ad has been there for years -- imagine how cheap the company’s “per impression” cost was.

These ads often benefit from using a series of pictures showing readers each step in the process of using your product. If you try this approach, show the ad to some people first. The worst thing a “How To” ad can do is confuse the reader about exactly what they are suppose to do. If possible, give the ad some additional value by including other helpful information (like the Ten Stains ad). The more valuable the information seems, and the more likely readers think they might have a use for it later, the better your chances of it ending up on the laundry room wall, or some other key display area.

9) **Make your ad copy a letter**. People like personal letters, especially if they're written to other people and we can sneak a glance at them. Most people have this

voyeuristic curiosity to some degree. We even have an adage, "*Curiosity killed the cat*," to warn against snooping in other people's affairs.

Take advantage of this quirk in human nature by laying out your ad like a letter, either typewritten or in clear handwriting (preferable, but limiting). The headline should clearly show it is a "private" letter, such as "*A Letter to my Hated Boss*," or "*A Husband's Last Letter To His Wife*." (Or, if you really want to bring ‘em in by combining sex, “*A Husband’s Last Letter to His Unfaithful Wife*.”) Ads headlined as an “Open Letter” to customers or stockholders have less appeal because they are “public,” not “private.”

We know what a letter looks like, and it doesn’t look like a page of a magazine or newspaper. That’s why you will generally have more impact with this technique if you show the edges of the letter in the ad, just as though the reader was looking at a letter laying on the page. You can use a little drop shadow to make it stand out from the page.

The text should sound like a letter, but make points that relate to the product or the product class. **Ad copy which suggests a story, contains emotional feelings, and tugs at the heartstrings will hold many readers to the end.** For example, in the “last letter” ad noted above, a new husband writes an apology to his bride for failing to sign the life insurance papers before he left for his business trip. He then goes on to describe what fun they will have as soon as they can afford a honeymoon, promises his undying love, and signs it “Forever Yours, Mike.” Mike’s letter establishes that he is nice (like the male reader) and has a terrific wife (like the male reader). Under that letter the reader sees a “telegram” or a “torn newspaper story” in which the reader discovers the man is dead (“*Young Salesman Killed in Cab Crash*”), leaving his new bride destitute and without life insurance. Because the male reader liked and identified with Mike the salesman, his “death” is slightly more real. That identification involves the reader, making him think “That guy could be me! And his wife could be my wife!” In this simple way, the ad has stimulated a strong fear, specifically the fear of feeling guilty. THEN, at the bottom, the ad shows the reader how to avoid that fear -- by purchasing a lot of life insurance from the ABC Company. The letter technique can teach a strong, emotional moral lesson useful for numerous product/service ads -- “*get it now, before it's too late.*”

10) **Use testimonials from respected figures or organizations**. Remember the *"Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval,"* or motels that posted an "AAA" sign to attract travelers, or the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) safety symbol on products? Those are testimonials. They say to readers that a respected organization has looked at this product for you and said it is OK. Other examples: computer software proclaiming their four-star ranking by some top computer magazine; appliances announcing their top rating by Consumer Reports; or restaurants quoting from a good newspaper review. Testimonials give readers confidence because they seem to say that an unbiased organization or person has carefully examined the product and approved it.

Testimonials can be tricky. **They almost entirely depend on the credibility of the endorser to comment on this product.** For example, a dentist is credible recommending a dental floss, because teeth are his profession. A dentist recommending a cake mix isn’t credible because he has no obvious expertise in baking. Here are a few guidelines for using testimonials in your ads:

(1) Be sure your testimonial comes from a person or organization which readers will respect. If the organization is not well-known, explain what it is in such a way that the reader understands the organization is unbiased, competent, and trustworthy. (*“The Zoot Suit Testing Center has issued critical evaluation reports on Zoot Suit quality to government regulators for over three decades. Their tough analysis is respected in and out of the garment industry.”*)

(2) Be sure the endorser has strong credentials in the field. For example, a computer engineer's comments about a new hard drive will carry more weight than the endorsement of a computer store owner. (The exception is the Celebrity endorsement)

(3) Be sure not to exaggerate. For example, an advertising "blurb" for a new movie which says "*The Greatest Film Since Gone With The Wind*” is less believable than *"The Romantic Drama of the Year*." Readers just don't believe statements they think are exaggerations, even if they are true. Using them will hurt your ad’s credibility.

The real bottom line in advertising is trust. You want the reader to trust what you tell them, because if they don't trust the ad, they certainly won't trust the product, and won't buy it. Readers WANT to trust your ad. They are looking for information about a product they’re interested in buying. If they can believe your claims (through your testimonials), they won’t have to look any farther, saving them time and frustration. In other words, they’re willing believers.

But, buyers are also more sophisticated than ever about “rip-offs” -- life and TV shows like 60 Minutes have given them a practical education. They have a well-trained “nose” that can smell a poor con job. Barnum said, *“There’s a sucker born every minute.”* Today it might be one every ten minutes. **Always put your ad copy to the smell test**. If anything in the ad smells "fishy" to the people who review it (even if it is true), your readers will smell it, too. Trust is not easy to win, but nearly impossible to regain. Be sure every claim you make is not only true, but sounds true, too.

That brings us to **celebrity endorsements**. Celebrities come in all levels of fame, from local to international. If you have a local product, think about using a local celebrity. For example, an effective spokesman for several products sold in Phoenix, Arizona featured the star of an old, but beloved, children’s show from the ‘50s who was unknown outside Arizona.

There are mixed opinions about using celebrity endorsements. Some claim that people know the celebrities are paid, and so their word is suspect. Others claim that the "celebrity power" overcomes this suspicion. I suspect a lot of the reaction to a celebrity endorsement depends on the reputation and image of the celebrity.

For example, I would not be inclined to buy a fishing rod endorsed by former Chicago Bull's basketball star Dennis Rodman, because his reputation precedes him,

and he doesn’t know anything about fishing. I would be more inclined to check out a fishing rod endorsed by Bull's star Michael Jordan because his image to me is more trustworthy, even if he, too, doesn’t know anything about fishing.

The flip side of that argument is that some products can get away with using a celebrity with a poor reputation (if they have to), as long as the reader perceives that the star knows what he’s talking about. For example, golf’s bad boy John Daly could still sell clubs and balls because the average golfer figures he still can tell which is the best type of golf ball and driver to hit for distance.

Celebrities are chosen for their image, not necessarily what they know. It was for just such a reason that AT&T used actor Cliff Robertson as its spokesman -- people liked his on-screen image and saw him as an honest, believable person. The same is true of the sponsors of Paul Harvey’s radio show. Perhaps the most trusted media celebrity of all time was Arthur Godfrey. While critics said his radio voice sounded like a “shoebox full of bullfrogs,” no one before or since has sold more with a simple endorsement than Godfrey. It came down to one thing for most listeners -- they just trusted what Arthur Godfrey told them. They felt he was their friend.

11) **Offer then something exciting or adventurous**. People don’t want your product, but they do want some excitement and adventure in their “hum drum little lives.”

If you’re selling foreign travel, for example, or white water rafting, or even animal parks, you’ve got a product with built-in excitement and the potential for adventure. Using this technique, the ads practically write themselves. But if you are selling shoes or hotdogs or fuel pumps, to use this technique effectively you’ve got to find other ways to promise readers adventure and excitement.

You can do this in one of two ways. First, you can promise them a gift (or an opportunity to win a gift) which spells adventure for the reader -- it could be anything from a decoder ring to a trip to Cairo, depending on your target consumer. (“*Test drive the new Bronco and you could be on a vacation of a lifetime to the Pyramids of Egypt.”*) Be sure the reader has to physically interact with your product (and sales force) to get the prize. *(“Send in the bar code from three boxes of Cracker Jacks to receive a special t-shirt from Bart Simpson that will make you howl! And make your parents real mad.”)*

The second way is to give your readers an adventure in print, like an exciting Indiana Jones-type story involving your product and its key features. (“I was lost in the dark, rat-infested catacombs below Rome with only a stick of Juicy Fruit to keep me from going mad...”) By allowing readers to live a short, vicarious adventure -- and in doing so vicariously use your product -- you have given them a momentarily rewarding experience, a break from their ordinary lives. They’ll like you for it. And meanwhile they have given your product a sort of mental “test drive,” making them more likely to later check it out.

Either way you choose, you’ve provided readers with something of value in exchange for their time, and created a value-added component to your product that has created more interest in it.

12) **Tie your product in with a greater movement**. Many products now try to show how they help clean up the environment (so-called “green” advertising.) Others associate their product with education of our kids as a way to boost their image. Still other companies take a historical perspective, pointing out how long the product has been available.

One classic image ad for Steinway Pianos showed an old-looking black & white drawing of a concert pianist with flowing white hair, a shaft of sunlight illuminating his face as he played a black (Steinway) piano. The headline read, "*The Instrument of Immortals*." (The unspoken message: *“If it’s good enough for Chopin and Tchaikovsky, it’s sure good enough for you.*") The ad’s body copy began by linking Steinway pianos to music history: "*There has been but one supreme piano in the history of music. In the days of Liszt and Wagner, of Rubenstein and Berlioz, the pre-eminence of Steinway was as unquestioned as it is today*..." After reading that ad, you should not only want a Steinway, even if you don't play, but you should feel privileged that they would even consider selling you one.

This ad is also an excellent example of a "**class appeal**" technique discussed above, in which you offer a product used by an exclusive and admired set of people. If your product is used by an elite set of people, especially those who do something which is widely admired, consider using this technique. [Through carefully writing, you can create an image of admiration about nearly any set of individuals. However, ethics, morality and common sense should dictate your selective use of this technique.]

13) **Do a comparison**. Comparing your product with some competitors is a good way to position your product in the marketplace. If you're going for the "value" customer, you may use a table of figures showing your product has the same major features of competing products at a lower cost. (*“Albertson’s brand pain reliever has exactly the same ingredients as high-priced Excedrin, but at half the cost. Do you really like their box that much more?”*)

If you have <u>more</u> features than your competitors’ products, put the full list in a comparison chart so that you seem to overwhelm the competition with the number of check marks or “Yes” notations in your product's column of features. For example, Federal Express compared their services with the US Post Office in this ad which points out all the things you don’t get by using Uncle Sam: *“No tracking, no money-back guarantee, no proof of delivery, no overnight commitment, no on-call pick up of your*

package.” For some readers, the ad just emphasizes things they already know, while others learn something new. Either way, the ad reinforces the service quality of Fed Ex over the Post Office.

Hertz took the same approach when the company finally struck back at the upstart Avis rental cars which had so effectively used the slogan “We Try Harder” to take market share away from Hertz. One comparison ad Hertz ran showed the company had twice as many cars, twice as many locations, and twice as many people to serve customers as Avis did. The ad concluded with a verbal stake in the heart: *“It’s no wonder they have to try harder.”*

14) **Create fear**. A mild level of fear is a great motivator. When we are worried that something might happen, but we can stop or avoid it by acting now, we often will -- like putting on our seat belts.

An auto parts manufacturer ran ads in print and on TV featuring a car mechanic explaining that the expensive repair job he's just completed could have been avoided with preventive maintenance and the right parts. The ad’s memorable closing line was, "*You can pay me now, or pay me later*."

Other ads using this technique include those which promise to calm readers’ fear of sunburn, clinging clothes, frizzy hair, stained teeth, bad breath, stinky feet, bankruptcy, and staying home on Saturday night, just to name a few. Some great insurance ads have used the technique by describing the horrible life a family faces when the bread winner doesn’t have enough life insurance to provide for his wife and children.

In using this technique, the disaster sets up the ad, and the product is then shown as the way to prevent it. The ad structure generally doesn't work as well if you talk about the product first. Think about it. You show the wagon train being attacked by the Indians BEFORE you show the 7th Calvary riding to the rescue. (Look back at the “Tell a Story” technique, #2, for a good example of playing off of a buyer’s fear response.)

One of my personal favorite examples of the fear technique was done by a pizza company. Their TV ad showed an average middle aged guy sitting at a kitchen table alone, eating a pizza. The announcer talks to him, saying, *"Did you know that store-bought pizza you're eating contains Casein?*" The man looks up, unconcerned. The announcer continues, *"And did you know that casein is one of the main ingredients in glue?"* Now the man is horrified. "*GL-UE!?"* he cries, dropping the pizza. The announcer then goes on to say his pizza doesn't contain casein. The logic may not hold up, but the clear emotional fear message is, "*eat that pizza and you're eating glue."*

Many effective ads have a **stated message** and an **implied message**, which may only have a passing relationship with each other. The stated message talks to the reasoning part of the mind, while the implied message nearly always talks to the emotional part of the mind.

David Ogilvy’s classic Rolls Royce ad (“At 60 miles an hour the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the Electric Clock”) was filled with “reasons why” the reader should logically want to own the car. But the headline, the car’s photo, and the body copy were also sending out a covert, unstated emotional message -- “People who drive this car are the best, the very top of the social ladder.” That covert “desire motivation” message combined with the overt “reason why” message to create a one-two punch. The emotional message makes you want the car, and the overt message gives you the reasons to justify your desire.


Scientist invents easy solution for hard water problems

15) **Make it look like an article.** Research shows that people read articles far more often than they look at ads, and they look at article headlines the most. So, try to make your ad look like an article to get that first glance, then design your message in the form of an article to get them to read it.

The remaining body copy tips apply to all the techniques described above, and others which weren’t. They offer a solid approach in constructing your copy. While professionals may break these rules sometimes, because they know how to do it effectively, it is usually safest to stick to some simple ideas when you’re starting.

16) **Prepare readers for your message**. The good safari guide prepares his guests for what they will see, knowing they will enjoy, understand, and remember it better. You should do the same for your readers.

While it is grossly oversimplified, thinking of the way the mind stores information as a series of manila folders in file cabinet drawers is a useful idea as you design your ad copy. If you sell laundry soap, your customers will likely have the information about that topic stored in a particular group of nerve cells, or “file cabinet.” That file cabinet’s label might be “laundry,” and the file folder label might be “soaps.” By alerting your readers where the information should be stored, they will be able to process it more quickly and completely, improving their memory of your information. Without that help, the information might be stored in some other area, making it less accessible when the reader tries to remember what she liked about your product. (This “file cabinet” analogy to sets of nerve cells is only meant to help you glimpse the process of memory as we suspect it from research. It is vastly more complex, probably more complex than we can

imagine now. The analogy is only useful in creating effective ad copy, not as an image for the actual biological process of memory.)

Here’s how you can use this idea: Prepare your readers for the message by telling them the type of product you’ve got or the type of problem it will solve or what’s in it for them. (If your headline or first sentence reads, "*Washing clothes will never be the same -- Biz is Here,*" you’ve told readers the ad involves laundry.) That hint helps the reader to store the information about the product in the right “file folder” in her memory -- the one where she keeps information about washing soaps. Later, in the store, the sight of washing soaps should help stimulate her memory to recall the product name and its attributes. Hundreds of psychological research studies show that preparing people for the type of information they will receive significantly increases the recall of that information. If the person doesn’t have to recall the information, but only recognize it (like a multiple choice test), the amount of information remembered is even greater.

17) **Body copy may be short or long, but it must be interesting**. Adman David Ogilvy said, "*You cannot bore people into buying your product. You must interest them in buying it*."

How do you interest them? By showing them how your product can satisfy one or more of their needs, wants, fears, and desires. In other words, answer their most basic question, "***What's in it for me?"*** If you can do that, the length of the ad probably will not matter. You would read a long ad if the product mattered to you, and would not read the shortest ad for a product having no interest for you. For example, you may not read the cleverest ad about *Pampers*, but read the most boring ad about the benefits and dangers of *Viagra*.

Start with the primary motivation of your readers. What change do they want your product or service to make in their lives? That is the key to grabbing their interest. For example, if you sell financial planning services, your customers aren’t after an investment portfolio or money management; those things are just process. The change they want you to make in their lives is to give them a feeling of greater security and flexibility in their future. That’s the focus of your ad. Stimulate that motivation, which has its roots in their Needs, Fears and Desires. Then promise to satisfy that motivation. Remember, all you need to accomplish with your ad is to get them to pick up the phone, visit the store, or send an e-mail. You don’t have to close the deal through the ad.

18) **Use short, familiar words.** Sir Winston Churchill, one of the great writers of our century, said, "*Old words are best. Old words, when they are short words, are best of all*."

Make it easy for readers to understand your words, and your sentences. If they must take some mental time and energy to decipher your meanings, they won't be as engrossed in the ad, reducing both its recall and impact. Want a good example of effectively using short, familiar words? Read any of the novels by Clive Custler or Stephen King. You'll see descriptions colored in with short, familiar, meaningful words

which paint a picture in a waterfall of short sentences. (From King's *The Tommyknockers*: *"Peter whined. Anderson glanced at the dog, then stood up. Both knees popped. Her left foot tingled with pins and needles. She fished her pocket watch out of her pants. . .*") Each sentence is like a brush stroke in a painting, adding just a little more meaning to the finished picture.

Old, short words help to convey a feeling of intimacy between you and the reader. They say that you aren't "putting on airs," but are talking to him "like folks," plain and simple. Another psychological value of old, short words is that they often create memory traces which are easier to recall, and associate with other information already in storage, making it more likely the reader will understand and remember your message.

19) **Keep your nose out of the air as you write.** People hate it when you talk down to them or patronize them. Remember, they are giving you some of their valuable time. Treat them like a guest at your dinner table, not a servant or backward child. For a good style model, listen to network evening newscasts. That is their approach. The CBS News style manual used to tell writers to write a news story that could be understood by viewers with an eighth grade education. That's good advice. (It's even lower now!) Try to make your ad copy sound like you are talking to a good friend who has an eighth grade education -- that is, clear, simple, and respectful.

20) **Organize your ideas clearly.** Most copy is comprised of a series of facts and ideas. Although you know them, your reader doesn't. Your goal is for the reader to understand how each fact and idea fit together to form an inescapable conclusion -- that they need to find out more about what you're selling! To accomplish that goal, each fact and idea must be carefully fitted together like bricks in a wall. If the ideas are not presented in the most persuasive order, readers who might have visited your store will not be convinced that you can help them.

Try this experiment: Write down each fact or idea you believe should be included in your ad on a 3 x 5 card. Now shuffle the cards and read each card in order. Chances are the sequence will make some sense, but it may be hard to follow. That is why the sequence of ideas you present to your reader must be in the right order. Now take the cards and lay out each one in the order which seems most logical to you. The message should be clear. But is it persuasive? Ask yourself if you could reorder the cards in order to increase the impact and persuasiveness of the message without damaging the logic of the order.

For example, if you sell copy services, you could tell the reader about the machines you have, the cost, your hours, how you can save them time, make their work look more professional, and so on. Logically, you could present those facts and ideas in several orders. But to persuade, you should begin and end with the facts and ideas that will stimulate the key "hot button" motivators of the reader. (*"Need 100 color copies of a report at 2:00 a.m.? CopyShop can do it. We never close. Our copiers are the finest IBM sells. And our prices are among the lowest you'll find. When you have to look*

good, we’ll make sure you do. Give us a chance to help you shine.”) What are the hot buttons? “Time/convenience” and “make me look good.” The body copy is bookended by these hot buttons, with other information in between.

21) **Remind them of what they want**. We all need, want, fear, and desire many things. While we are would like to satisfy all of our motivations, they all aren't on our mental “radar screen” all the time. You may fervently desire a trip to Europe, but you don’t think about it all the time. But when you see an ad for the splendors of Rome, the desire suddenly pops up again.

Your headline and/or picture should have stimulated a hot button motivation (a need, want, fear, or desire) in the reader’s mind. A Dr. Sholl’s foot powder ad might begin with the headline "*Do Your Feet Smell*?" This stimulates a fear motivation in the reader. The ad’s body copy should then further stimulate that motivation to avoid foot odor. "*When you take your shoes off, do women scream and strong men cry? Foot order is the silent offender we all may have."* Ad copy like this stimulates most people's fear of offending others with body odor. Having put that fear on their radar screen for a moment, they are now ready to hear a solution. Then your ad promises to relieve that fear through the odor eating molecules in Dr. Sholl’s foot powder.

It is important to remember the sequence of ideas in the ad: Problem, then Solution.

First, you remind them of the need, want, fear, or desire your product can satisfy. (*“Have You Seen the Acropolis by Moonlight?* ”)

Second, you increase that desire. (“*Greece offers you the romance of an exotic Mediterranean vacation with the comforts of home.”)*

Third, you tell them how to satisfy that desire right now. (“*American Airlines Flies to Athens Every Day. We’ve got a Seat for You.”)*

In this way **you create a chain of problems and solutions in the readers minds:** *"You got this problem? Here's how our product can satisfy you. You got that problem, too? Yeah, this feature will take care of it."* Some ads use a Question-And-Answer format to set up a series of problems just so they can show the product will solve them. This is a good technique because it seems very objective and comprehensive, but its underlying design is very persuasive.

22) **Use repetition**. A famous old preacher was once asked why people liked his sermons so much. He replied, "*I tell 'em what I'm going to tell them. I tell them. Then I tell them what I told them."*

The importance of repetition in memory has been proven thousands of time since the first modern learning experiments by Ebbinghaus in 1883. **Repeating your message is one important way to get viewers or readers to select your product**. Repetition seems to work better when it is done over time, rather than all at once. For example, repeating to yourself "*Get milk , cheese, fruit and eggs*" several times over the

space of ten minutes will lodge it in your memory better than if you just said it three times in a row.

It’s called “spaced” repetition, and the mental process involved is why you can still remember some television commercials and slogans that are twenty years old (like *“I can’t believe I ate the whole thing!”* or *“Try it, you’ll like it!”* or *“You deserve a break today*.”) Some people can still recite the entire list of ingredients on a Big Mac because they remember the old McDonald’s jingle “pickles, lettuce . . .” Want more proof? Most people, when asked to recite the alphabet, will do so with the rhythm of the alphabet song we learned as children: “a,b,c,d,e,f,g (pause), h,i,j,k, (fast) l,m,n,o,p (pause) . . .” In our heads we may even hear the faint melody of the song. Repetition is a powerful tool in creating long term memory.

That mental process is the reason repeated exposure to the same commercial message over several weeks or months can nearly SuperGlue a good ad into your memory. And it’s the reason major corporations spend tens of millions of dollars on repeated presentations of their ads -- in hopes people will remember them.

Here's something else to remember about repetition: it works better when the message creates a mental image, a picture in your mind. This mental imagery, for example, makes it far easier to remember to buy a chocolate cake than to remember a phone number. In fact, numbers are generally very hard to remember unless they've undergone numerous repetitions (like your home phone or office phone numbers). Even then, they decay rapidly once you stop using them. Can you recall your home phone number from a place you used to live? Probably not, but you can probably visualize every room of the house.

Repetition is important <u>within</u> each ad, also. Select your top two features that will be important to the targeted buyer reading the ad. Repeat those features three times, perhaps in slightly different ways, throughout the ad. Each time the reader is exposed to the claim, the idea is imbedded a little further into memory. A lot of research shows that “spaced” repetition is better than “massed” repetition. In massed repetition, you repeat your idea continuously several times (“Open 24 Hours! Open 24 Hours! Open 24 Hours!”) Spaced repetition, as the term implies, spreads out the repetition over the entire ad. *(“Open 24 Hours, CopyShop is ready when you are. Our IMB copiers are ready for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We’re ready to provide any copying service you might need, include color copying, 24 hours a day.”)* Compared to massed repetition, spaced repetition can result in doubling the reader’s recall of your message.

To use this technique, first determine the top “hot button” motivations of your readers. Then use all the element of the ad at your disposal to repeat your promise to satisfy that motivation. For example, if you think the “anti-bacterial” feature of your cleaning product is very important to your women readers, you could use this ad format: At the top of the page are two photos -- the left one showing an active colony of germs (labeled “Germs: Before”), the right one showing very few germs (labeled “Germs: After”). Between the captions is a photo of the product with an arrow running through it

from the left photo to the right photo. The headline below reads *“Our Anti-Bacterial Formula Kills Germs You Can’t Even See.”* The body copy mentions the claim again. And the caption below the product photo at the bottom of the ad reads, “*Anti-Bacterial Knock-Out Punch.*” In this short ad, target buyers read “anti-bacterial” at least four times, and get a strong visual image of the power of the product to kill bacteria.

Remember, repetition is a key component of effective advertising and public relations. What’s repeated often enough is generally remembered.

23) **KISS -- Keep It Simple, Stupid**. Our short term memory for the attributes (features) of a product or service is very limited -- most facts about a product are quickly forgotten. Experience suggests that ads should **focus on a few major points** -- the ideas you want the viewers to remember the most. The selection of those points should be determined by which specific needs/wants/fears/desires you've selected as the most important to your target buyers. For example, if you sell cars, you probably have two dozen different reasons why the buyer would be happy with a new Ford, everything from the console to the drive train. But your ad isn’t meant to sell the car, just get the reader into the showroom. So pick out a few ideas which are most likely to get his attention, ideas which promise to satisfy his top “hot button” motivations for buying a new car. Save everything else for his visit.

You can’t count on the reader remembering any more than three or four ideas at the most. It is also important to link the ideas in some way, creating a unified mental image in the viewer's mind, which will greatly aid recall. Always ask yourself, "*Is this simple enough? Can it be simpler and still make my points?"*

Another reason to keep it simple is to avoid any negative response from the reader to minor points. *(“I love the new Fords, but the ad mentioned that they have those ‘idiot lights’ instead of gauges. Now that I think about it, I really prefer gauges. I wonder what the new Chevys have?”*) Remember, you just need to get them in the door. So select just the ideas that will accomplish that goal.

24) **Tell them what you can do for them**. It’s amazing how many ads don’t follow this simple rule. In trying to be artsy or cute, the ads lose sight of the goal -- to sell the message.

Remember, readers are looking for one thing -- satisfaction of some need, want, fear, or desire. Show them that you can satisfy their underlying motivations for buying your type of product or service. Tell them “what’s in it for them.” Don’t beat around the bush about it either. If they want romance, show them romance. Don’t make them guess what you’re really selling. Remember, they don’t want to buy your product, so don’t make the mistake of offering it to them, except as the means to get what they really want to buy. Like Gillette, you’re not selling blades, you’re selling “clean shaves and good looks.” Forget that lesson at your peril.

Chapter Six:

HOW TO CREATE AD DESIGNS THAT GRAB READERS

Imagine a plate of food served at an expensive restaurant. The “presentation” of the food is an important part of the diner’s enjoyment. Each dish is decorated, the colors are harmonious, the little accents and garnishes add that extra touch. It looks “picture perfect.” You’re proud to have ordered such a beautiful dish. In fact, you may even be tempted to remark, “It looks too pretty to eat!”

Now imagine a plate of the same food served at a greasy spoon cafe. Each dish is tossed on the plate, falling into each other and over the side. No decorations, no garnish, no accents. And no style. In fact, it could look so bad that it revolts you, no matter how good it might actually taste. (One famous psychological study on colors and food found that most subjects wouldn’t eat blue meat, no matter how good it had tasted when their eyes were closed!) Your own experiences should show you that the overall “plate experience” is an important part of your dining satisfaction.

Print ads also need style in their layout to be effective. You can have an eye-catching picture, a great headline, and persuasive body copy. But if it’s presented badly, much of its effectiveness will be lost. **Good design can’t save a bad ad, but bad design can destroy a good ad**.

For example, an ad for a package service used an interesting picture to catch attention, but placed its headline over an important element in the photo. The headline was printed in a deep red, which stood out over the lighter parts of the picture, but nearly disappeared in the darker parts. The well-written body copy was printed too small, placed where the eye was not drawn to it, printed in grey, making it even harder to read, and “justified right,” (all the lines of copy were even on their right sides and uneven on the left -- just the opposite of what we’re used to seeing) which is distracting to the reader. In short, the message foundered on poor layout design.

There are numerous books about design, many of them written for graphic artists concerned with “art,” not “sales.” If you're creating display advertising (larger size ads, not classified ads), flyers, brochures, or other types of print materials, be very careful that the layout of your ad is inviting to the eye. The following points are offered to help you plan or evaluate the design of your ad as a tool to sell its message.

1) **Your ad should be in balance.** Every element (picture, block of type, white space) in an ad has a “weight.” To be balanced, the weight on the left side of your picture should be about the same as that on the right. People like pictures which seem balanced or stable. Often a picture on one side will be balanced with a block of type on the other. You can get a feel for this by tearing out full page ads in magazines and folding them lengthwise. Notice how the elements on one side have counterweights on the other. You don’t have to be an expert on this. Your printer can help you. But its

important for you to be aware of the need for balance before you get too far along in your initial planning for the ad.

2) **Your ad should have direction.** An ad is a collection of words and pictures. It is also a persuasive pitch. Since all pitches are carefully constructed to present some ideas first and other later, it’s obvious that you want your reader’s eyes to proceed through the ad in the order you intend them to. You want a starting point and an ending point. In between you want to construct a “path” for the eye to follow. Your starting point is usually your picture and/or headline.

In a good layout design, the eye is lead from the picture down to the headline. The headline leads the eye into the first paragraph of copy. The copy layout of succeeding paragraphs leads the eye through the pitch in the proper order, ending at the final idea, usually the brand and address. The danger comes when you inadvertently offer the eye another way to go, allowing the reader to get off the right path. Always remember that the eye is accustomed to moving from right to left, and from top to bottom. Any pathway which is counter to this natural movement should be suspect.

For example, if you had a large picture in the top middle of the page, chances are any copy above it could be easily overlooked. Or you might have a picture towards the bottom of a column of type, with a little more type below it. Readers may get to the picture and then look at the top of the next column, missing your bottom paragraph entirely. Or the ad may include a heavy line in a drawing which fences off some paragraph of type. Or an isolated paragraph might be next to a picture to large or dominant that the eye never sees the copy.

The eye also naturally moves from big elements to small ones; from colored elements to black-and-white ones; from unusual shapes to common shapes; and from unbalanced shapes to balanced shapes. You can use these tendencies to guide the eyes of your readers along the right path, as well as to avoid distractions that could lead them off the pathway. Sometimes ads even use a dashed line to help guide the reader’s eyes from one element to another.

It’s usually smarter to stick to a basic, more conservative layout unless you know what you’re doing. When you’ve got a rough plan down on paper, ask several people to look at it to be sure all of your ideas are getting noticed.

3) **Your ad should appear unified.** Ads are made up of different pieces put together on a page, like a child’s picture puzzle. Each piece has elements that create its visual look, and contribute to the overall visual look of the ad. These elements include the shape, size, texture, color and mood. It is important that the reader senses the elements in all the pieces fit together harmoniously. Harmony is created by selecting elements that fit together, then arranging them in a way that makes them all “hang together.”

Most of us can visualize the famous Grant Wood painting “American Gothic.” The three major visual elements in the picture are the farmer, his wife, and their house, seen in the center of the frame behind the couple. The picture “hangs together” because

(A) It is balanced. The man is on right side, woman on left side, house in the middle.

(B) The shape and size of the man and woman are similar. Even the shape of their faces is similar. Imagine how “off kilter” it would look if the woman pictured had a round face, were a midget, or was replaced by a small dog.

(C) The colors of the three elements work together, primarily dark and muted colors contrasted with white. Imagine how jarring the look would be if the farmer was wearing a tie-dyed t-shirt, or his wife had bright red hair.

(D) The mood of each piece is similar. They are low-key, somber pieces, even the house. Imagine how out-of-place the farmer would look if he was grinning.

Here’s an example of an ad with unharmonious elements: A funeral home ad has a picture of a coffin. The picture has a bright yellow striped border. Some of the text is written in script, while other is in Old English. A picture of a grinning man holding a big water pistol is in the middle of the ad with a cartoon balloon over his head that reads, “Come on Down!”. You can see already how these elements do not fit together. What changes would you make to create a unified look? As you think through that answer, you will be using your abilities to recognize harmony and unity.

Usually a good way to approach unity is to select the pieces of the ad which have a similar mood and style. The typeface and size in a unified ad should have the same character as the artwork. If any piece or element in a piece looks “jarring” to you, it probably will to the reader.

4) **Your ad should have a focal point**. The focal point of a picture is the place to which the eye is initially drawn. It is our doorway into the picture. We begin with the focal point and explore the ad from there. Most often the focal point is found in the picture, although a particularly powerful or bold word can pull the eye to it. The focal point of the ad should be immediately interesting, and create the foundation for understanding the picture. An ad or picture without a focal point allows the eye to skip over the picture like a stone skipping on a pond. It does not pull the eye into the ad. When you select some possible pictures, give them to several people and ask, “What does your eye look at first?” If nearly all of the people give the same answer, you know you’ve got a strong focal point.

5) **The length of your lines of copy should not be too long or too short**. Our eyes are accustomed to reading about six to sixteen words per line of type, which is about what we see in newspapers, many popular magazines, and in most letters or memos. Columns which are very narrow or very wide are harder to read.

6) **Don’t make your Type too Small**. Words which are tiny (roughly smaller than 10-point type) are not easy to read, and almost impossible for many older readers. Imagine having to wade through an ad written in this 8-point type. You’d take one look at what you were faced with and just turn the page!

7) **Don’t Get too Fancy**. A typeface or font which is oddly shaped is often hard to read. This is especially true in your body copy. Such fonts can be distracting, taking the reader’s attention away from your ideas. For example, the Old English type with its flourishes and curlicues, or THE SHADOWED LOOK OF GOLDMINE, or the wacky appearance of John Handy. "Reversed" type (white or colored letters on a black or dark background) are hard to read unless they are large, like in a headline. Then they can be effective, because the unusual mass of black on the page draws our eyes, which go automatically to the white lettered words. Body copy should not be reversed. Another type of font that’s often hard to read is Script. Script-type fonts should only be used when its elegant appearance lends something to the image of the product, such as a women’s fashion store named Tropic of Paradise. A few words of script are far more acceptable to the reader than an entire ad in script, no matter how “cool” your sister thinks it looks.

The typeface you select should reflect the image of your product. A conservative law firm or major corporation aren’t likely to use a typeface which is not in keeping with the image they have built of their brand. You shouldn’t either. Make your typeface work for you, not against you.

Use a drop cap, like this. Paragraphs which begin with a large, bold initial letter (called a "drop cap") are read more. The big, bold letter attracts the eye, and forces the mind to read the first word, which draws the eye farther into the paragraph.

8) **Disguise what it is.** Ads come with many different looks. As David Ogilvy points out, "*There is no law that says an advertisement must look like an advertisement. If you make them look like editorial pages, you will attract more readers.* ***Roughly six times as many people read the average article as the average advertisement.*** *Very few advertisements are read by more than one reader in twenty*." One good way to disguise your ad is to make it look like a news story, complete with a story headline, newspaper columns layout, and a picture(s) with caption.

9) **Put your headline <u>below</u> the picture**, unless the impact of the picture and headline together is best served by having the reader look at the headline first. Should that be the case, the design of the headline must be exceptionally powerful to drag the eye to it, rather than the photo.

People's eyes tend to be attracted to pictures. It’s the first thing many readers look at. Then our eyes are conditioned to move downward, left to right. A headline which is below the picture will be read more than one above, because our eyes don’t normally travel upward on the page when reading. Putting the headline inside the picture is also another good way to gain attention, but make absolutely sure that every letter is in sharp contrast with its background so the headline stands out.

10) **Create a feeling of depth to attract attention**. Place part of the headline behind a central figure in the photo, just as *Time* magazine does each week on its cover. This gives something of an illusion of 3-D, and draws attention to both the headline and picture. A related technique is to place the picture in a frame, then extend on element in the photo outside the frame. For example, a baseball ad may show a framed picture of an outfielder leaping for the ball, with the fielder’s arm and glove extending above the frame. Putting a frame (even a thin black line) around a picture will increase the attention it gets from readers.

11) **Put important copy in a box**. If you want people to read something, put a box around it. A box is a signal to readers “This is important, pay attention to it.” Don’t go overboard on this, though. An ad filled with little boxes will repel rather than attract readers, because you’ve made your ad look too complicated.

12) **Use screens**. A screen is a block of diffused color. If you are using black ink, for example, a 20% screen (i.e. only 20% of the fully saturated black color actually gets on the page) will appear to the reader as a block of light gray. Screens are most often used to make boxes of type stand out by creating a background color for the words. Screens are effective and easy to use. Talk to your printer about them.

13) **Keep your paragraphs short.** When the eye is faced with a long block of type, it doesn’t see all the individual words, just a long black and white rectangle. The larger that rectangle, the more daunting it seems to the reader. That is why smaller paragraphs, often in

spaced columns of type, initially seem easier to handle. This is especially true of the first few paragraphs, where it is easy to lose the reader.

Ads which feature large blocks of type stretching across the entire page do not invite our eye to come in. Instead they act like walls, keeping us out. Get a basic book on advertising or brochure layouts from the public library, or tear out ads in the newspaper or magazines which seem very attractive and easy to read. If nothing else, copy the way their good examples are designed. Layout is important. Take the time to look at a book, ask a professional, and try out different ideas. A good printer will be able to help you if you listen.

14) **Use illustrations or other visuals to break up type**. For pieces with a lot of body copy, consider scattering pictures or drawings to break up the solid blocks of type into more appealing, smaller bites. Use pictures which illustrate or explain your product’s features. These pictures do not need to have a rectangular shape or a frame, they can simply be a cut-out of some part of a picture, like a machine, boat, palm tree, waiter, elephant, and so on. Ads often look more visually appealing (and thus more likely to be read) if they include illustrations, so consider adding a few, even if they are only symbolic of some of your ideas or services (like a hammer in an ad for carpentry service, or a palm tree in a travel agency’s ad.)

15) **Use color**. If you can afford even one additional color in your ad, use it. Color attracts. When used in solid blocks, it will pull the eye to it like a magnet, especially the bright colors like yellow, orange, red, and florescent colors of all kinds. For example, an ad for business furniture showed a very large, red price tag. The headline written on it read, “*No matter how good the furniture looks, most people look here first.”* The ad was effective using just two colors -- red and black. Of course, full color (called “four color process”) pictures attract attention, but the large additional cost may not be worth the increase in attention, especially if you creatively manipulate two or three separate colors, at a much lower cost.

16) **White space is your friend, not your enemy**. Many amateur designers look at any space not filled with words or pictures as wasted space. Not true. White space is an important element in your ad. It gives “breathing room” to the other elements in the ad. People just do not like to wade through an ad crammed with densely-packed information. There are some exceptions, ads of nearly solid copy which seem to work. But often these ads are for “get rich quick” schemes that lure the reader in with promises of vast wealth for a small investment. Adman David Ogilvy maintained that dense ads could work, and he proved it for Guinness and Merrill Lynch, whose ad headlined *“What Everybody Ought to Know About This Stock and Bond Business”* was seven columns of type. Neither of us are Mr. Ogilvy, though, so it’s smarter to stay away from ads with that pack in words like sardines in a can.

Treat white space as a design tool which can help attract readers. For example, imagine a newspaper page which is blank except for three rather small words in the center. Most people will be stopped short by a blank page, and will immediately look at the small headline. One of the first VW Beetle ads was a full page showing a Beetle toward the top left of the page, and a modest headline toward the bottom, *“Think Small.*” Most of the page was blank. Thumb

through any slick magazine. If any ad stops you, look at how the use of white space may have helped attract your attention. Try to find a collection of the VW Beetle ads from the ‘60s. They provide a wonderful opportunity to study the excellent use of pictures, catchy headlines, strong body copy, and clean layout. You could do worse than model your ads on them.

17) **Set off important words and sentences**. Not all words or ideas in an ad are of equal importance. Some words and ideas are critical. You can call special attention to them by a variety of means: Use boxes to enclose the sentences. Print the important words in **bold** letters, or underline them, or put them *italics*, or make the words bigger, or use a different font, or make them three dimensional, or set them off in some other N - O - V - E - L way.

These techniques also break up the visual monotony of the ad and make it more interesting to the reader.

18) **Be sure every element of your ad is clear**. While some people are intrigued by ads composed of strange people in odd locations doing meaningless things, most readers want an advertisement that’s straightforward and understandable. They don't want to have to work for the meaning, and most won't. Some perfume TV spots take this “strange people and places” approach, often confusing viewers about both the ad’s meaning and the product. Such ads can make viewers feel they've been given a test, and flunked because they didn't "get" it.

The more mental processing time you require of readers or viewers, the more unhappy and frustrated many of them will get. Your job is to sell the message, not impress readers with your artistic talents. You don’t care about winning awards, just selling products.

One of the best copywriters and agency chief’s of all time, Rosser Reeves of Ted Bates Advertising, once half-seriously threatened to fire any adman who won an industry award for “creativity.” Said Reeves, *“We’re here to sell products, not show off as artists.”* Great ad men like Reeves, Ogilvy, and Raymond Rubicam, could do both. Most cannot do either. If you have to choose an agency, pick Zig Ziegler over Michelangelo every time.

19) **Make your brand name prominent**. It’s amazing that some advertisers fail to emphasize their brand name. Your name should appear several times throughout the ad (remember the importance of repetition?). And it should be at the bottom of the ad, too -- a last reminder for the reader. It should be large enough not to be overlooked. And if you want the reader to call or visit your business, be sure to put your address and telephone number near your name.

20) **Test your ad’s layout by taking pieces away**. A good layout is like a good speech or a good story. It contains everything it should, but nothing else. Each piece of your ad asks the reader to spend a little time on it. But the reader’s mental clock is running, as he balances his initial interest in finding out what you have to say with the perceived value of the time it takes to receive your message. Giving the reader extraneous things to read or look at

takes away the time available to concentrate on your message. It may also help to confuse the reader as he tries to integrate all the pieces of the ad into a coherent whole concept. (If your message centered your veterinary services, putting the picture of a bear in the ad would confuse the reader, as he tried to figure out whether you treated bears also.)

A good test is to cut your ad up into pieces -- blocks of text, sidebars, headline, subheads, and graphics. Lay them all out on the paper as your ad would look. Then see whether you can remove any one of the pieces without hurting the ad’s balance, its proportion, its unity, or its overall impact. In a good layout, the removal of any one piece should require the redesign of the entire piece to bring it back into harmony.

Remember, pieces can contribute to the ad’s ideas and/or to its emotional impact or interest. Don’t throw anything away if it is important to one or both of those goals. But if it doesn’t hurt the layout of the ad, and doesn’t damage the overall impact of the message, then toss it. You want your ad as “clean” as possible, with every element contributing something to the overall effectiveness of the ad.

A Final Word of Advice

Be confident of your abilities. You aren't an advertising professional, but you don't have to be in order to produce simple, but effective print ads. You aren't a mechanic, but you can pump your own gas. You aren't a chef, but you can make a good roast. You aren't a horticulturists, but you can plant flowers that grow. And you can do this, too.

Just take it slow, do the steps we've discussed, and use your common sense in selecting the techniques for your particular product and target market.

Pour over magazine ads looking for those elements which grab your attention, hold your interest, and gain your acceptance. Not every ad in a slick magazine is good (effective), just as not every mechanic is qualified to fix your car just because he works in a garage. Use your own common sense about what “sells” you as a consumer of advertising.

Make a practice of looking at print ads from now on. When you find one you like, tear it out and put it in a folder. Make a note about what element(s) of the ad struck you as particularly effective. When its time for you to do your next ad, look through these ads to jump-start your creativity. You can’t just combine one idea from ad A with another from ad B, but you can use them to suggest approaches for your ad which will be effective.

When you have some ideas down, ask other people if the ad works (not how they would do it themselves!). Remember to analyze the response you get from each ad that you run. If an ad run in several different publications isn't producing a response, it probably needs to be fine tuned or changed. Don't be afraid to experiment some. But when you find an ad that does work, use it until it begins to produce diminishing results.

Take heart. Advertising isn't rocket science. Good advertising is really just talking to friends about a good deal. As you write, pretend you are writing to a good friend. Most mistakes happen when you try to be overly cute or tricky. Keep it simple. You don’t want to win awards, just sell your wears. Remember that *buying begins in the mind.* Keep your focus on your reader’s mind, and their money will follow.

Good luck. Believe in yourself. Believe you can make it happen. Others have done it. You can, too.

For more ideas and information on Psychological Marketing, explore the Web site of the Marketing Psychology Group at www.marketingpsychology.com***, or call us at 480-425-8600 in Scottsdale, Arizona.***

APPENDIX

12 Steps in Analyzing Your Customers

One of the first steps in designing a marketing plan is to determine who your target buyers are, what they know about your product, and why they might want to buy it -- how it may meet one or more of their needs, wants, or desires. You must have a clear picture of this information before you can construct a realistic marketing plan. This summary suggests steps that will help you in making this customer analysis. (For more information and tips about consumer analysis and research, visit the MPG Web site at www.marketingpsychology.com).

1. **Describe your potential customer in as much detail as possible.** Include such attributes as age, sex, race, nationality, culture, income level, social level, education, geographical location, occupation, family size, marital status, homeowner/renter, urban/suburban/rural, interests/hobbies/sports, participation in civic life, religious participation, health, health of family, etc. Naturally not all of these attributes will be relevant or meaningful to the marketing of your product/service, nor will you know some of the answers.

You may derive these answers from past experience, market surveys, focus groups, literature review, or common sense. In any case, it is important that you have as clear image of your customer as you do of your mother, wife, or child. Money spent on learning about your target buyer is money well-spent.

2. **What knowledge does this customer likely have about your product’s CLASS?** Does your buyer have experience with this type of merchandise/service? (i.e. Has she driven a car, used air freshener, eaten fruit, etc.) What does she know about it’s ...

a) CONCRETE attributes (price class, size, weight, appearance, etc.)?
b) ABSTRACT attributes (perceived quality)?
c) FUNCTIONAL attributes (handling, smoothness of acceleration, braking)?
d) PSYCHOSOCIAL attributes* (image of owning a car, how it fits with her own self-image -- am I a car-driving type of person?)

* The Psychosocial attributes involve the way the product makes us feel. That feeling may be have to do with social feelings (our relationship with others), economic (our perception of value), psychological (our feelings about ourselves and our self-image),

and emotional (the mood created by using or looking at the product), among other types.

3. **What knowledge does this customer likely have about your product's BRAND NAME?** Does your buyer have experience with this brand of merchandise? (i.e. Has she driven a Cadillac, used Glade air freshener, eaten mangos, etc.) What does she know about it's ...

a) CONCRETE attributes (price, size, engine, accessories, appearance, etc.)?
b) ABSTRACT attributes (perceived quality, smell, comfort)?
c) FUNCTIONAL attributes (handling, smoothness of acceleration, braking)?
d) PSYCHOSOCIAL attributes* (image of the brand, way it makes her feel to drive that type of car, and to be seen driving it, how it fits with own self-image -- am I a Cadillac type of person?)

4. **What knowledge does this customer likely have about your PRODUCT and its particular features or attributes?** Does your buyer have experience with your product or service? (i.e. Has she driven a Cadillac DeVille, used Glade Mountain Garden air freshener, eaten Safeway mangos, etc.) What does she know about it's ...

a) CONCRETE attributes (price, size, engine, accessories, appearance, etc.)?
b) ABSTRACT attributes (perceived quality, interior room, comfort)?
c) FUNCTIONAL attributes (handling, smoothness of acceleration, braking)?
d) PSYCHOSOCIAL attributes* (image of the brand, way it makes her feel to drive a DeVille, and to be seen driving it, how it fits with own self-image -- am I a DeVille type of person, or maybe a Fleetwood type person?)

5. **What NEEDS does this customer have?** What are the motivations which your type of product must satisfy? There are several different types of needs, such as physical (car with more room for a growing family), psychological (car that makes the buyer feel the family is safe), economic (car that is affordable), or social (car that will be admired by others.) Depending on the importance of the motivations, these outcomes may be needs, wants or desires. Focus here on those which are the *sine qua non* for making the purchase, results which must be achieved.

6. **What WANTS does this customer have?** Wants are those results of the purchase which the customer hopes to get, but which aren't absolutely necessary. A good-tasting hamburger may be his need, but getting it at a good price may just be a want. What satisfactions would your customer like to have from using or owning your type of product? (Car that holds its trade-in value or is easy to park.) Again, these wants may fall into several classes, including physical, psychological, economic, and social. Getting them in just the right category is not important; recognizing them as important buyer motivations is.

7. **What FEARS does this customer have?** Fears are powerful motivators. They come in two types -- fears of omission and fears of commission. Both are useful to you.

(A) What fears does the customer have about the status quo, of not making any purchase? What are the potential negative outcomes of that decision? How will those negative outcomes affect the buyer, physically, socially, psychologically?

(B) What fears does the customer have about making the wrong choice when buying your type of product? If something went wrong, in what ways could the customer be unhappy -- with the product, the buying process, and with himself?

8. **What DESIRES does this customer have?** Desires are like daydreams. Buyers don’t expect them to be satisfied, but they would be thrilled if it happened. For example, a woman doesn’t really expect her new perfume to result in finding Mr. Right, but it is a thrilling daydream to hope for, sort of like winning the lottery. Ask yourself, what are the customer’s probable social desires (buying a luxury car to make her friends envious), psychological desires (elevate the image she has of herself to that of a high upper class person), emotional desires (makes her feel like she’s wrapped in luxury), economic desires (to get it ‘on sale’), and so on.

9. **What are the attributes or features of my product’s class, brand, and particular product?**

List every quality or descriptor you or your focus groups can think of. Think in terms of concrete, abstract, functional, and psychosocial attributes, including image. It is important to analyze your product class, because the buyer’s expectations about the class are often their requirements of your product (we expect a car to be reliable transportation, no matter what brand or model.) It is important to analyze your brand to see if buyers have any positive or negative associations with it that may influence their buying decision. This step will help you determine what you actually have to offer, not just what your buyer may know about your product class, brand and product.

10 **Where do my product’s attributes match my target buyer’s needs, wants or desires?**

The first major hurdle in devising a marketing plan is to have enough reliable information to match your product’s attributes with your customer’s needs, wants, and desires, using as a springboard her knowledge about your product, and its class and brand. Using your answers in Questions 5 - 8 above, make a short list of the most important needs, wants, fears and desires of your target buyer. Now ask yourself which features of my product can I use as a promise to satisfy each of those key motivations? Those features will be the most important ones to include in your advertising. Don’t just say, “We’ve got this.” Stimulate the buyer’s memory for each specific key motivation, then promise to satisfy it with your product’s feature. (Don’t say, “Our cars have side-impact

airbags." Say, "Each year thousands of families endure the tragic loss of a loved one in a side-impact car wreck, often when a driver runs a red light at a busy intersection. Our new side-impact airbags provide excellent protection for your family in side-on collisions.")

11. **How much will my plan have to familiarize the buyer with my product, or its class and brand? In what specific areas will I need to educate the buyer? In what specific areas can I cut directly to an appeal to his/her needs, wants, and desires?**
You did the analysis of what your buyers probably know about your product class, brand and product in Questions 2 - 4 because you cannot assume they are familiar with all the attributes of your product. You must know. Knowledge is a necessary first step before an appeal can be effective. (If the buyer has never heard of a Lexus, your advertising must educate her about its image, qualities, etc. before the message will be effective.)

12. **What do I need to tell buyers in my ad to convince them to take the next step by making an inquiry about the product?** Based on the answers you've given above, select the most important facts to include in the ad. As noted above in the airbag example, it isn't enough to list these facts, but to stimulate the buyer's motivations, then show how each fact and feature will help satisfy those motivations.

Remember the fundamental idea behind Psychological Marketing -- the buyer does not want your product, and certainly does not want to pay you for it. The buyer wants to satisfy certain motivations. Your product is just the means to that end. To be the most effective, your ad must stimulate and then promise to satisfy the buyer's REAL motives for buying. The closer you come to hitting the buyer's motives, the more effective your ad will be.

Dr. Gary Witt
6910 East Fifth Avenue, Suite 210
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
480-425-8600 witt@marketingpsychology.com
www.marketingpsychology.com