



By Richard D. Czerniawski

MAKING ADVERTISING MATTER MORE: Part 1 – The Purpose of Advertising (Transcript)

This is Richard Czerniawski RDC) of BDNI, and today I have the privilege of having a discussion on a subject that should be near and dear to all of us marketers and that is on advertising. I would like to thank Bill Weintraub (WHW) for participating in this discussion. Bill and I go back a long, long way. I would say Bill has an incredible expertise in advertising. Bill, thank you very much. Would you please introduce yourself to everyone.

WHW: I am happy to be with you Richard. Yes, we do go back a ways. We started out at the same organization, Procter & Gamble, years ago. I worked there for about 15 years. Then I was CMO at Kellogg's company in Michigan. Then CMO at Tropicana in Florida. CMO at Coors for a decade in Colorado. I retired about 20 years ago and have been teaching at the University of Colorado at Boulder and I teach marketing and advertising here. Trying to poison young minds, if you will.

RDC: You know Bill, I know you are expanding these young minds when it comes to marketing, and in particular, the advertising function. It is so important for us to be able to expand minds. As a matter of fact, I am thinking that most marketers do not really appreciate advertising. I am not sure that they understand what advertising is. Would you mind stating what you believe advertising is all about?

WHW: Unfortunately, Richard, I think you are right about many of today's marketers. They don't appreciate or understand marketing. To me that is sad, but that is often what exists and particularly on Super Bowl commercials you will see that. Not all of them, but many of them. I think many advertisers or marketers today, they focus more on entertainment (rather) than selling. Not that entertainment or humor is wrong in advertising, but I think today, maybe more than historically, personal egos get involved. They want to produce advertising that they enjoy, and their friends appreciate at cocktail parties, and they have lost sight of effective advertising—what really builds business. And spending thousands or millions of dollars on advertising that does not build or have the potential to build a business, to me, is sad. It is unfortunate.

RDC: I think that many of the marketers think (of) advertising in the classical sense. In other words, advertising is TV and advertising is print. Actually, advertising takes many forms. To me, I would say that advertising is really your marketing messaging about the brand. One of the things you mentioned is humor, which is quite interesting because, when I started back in 1972, many of

my peers believed we needed to inject more humor into our advertising. Really no one can dictate what you need to inject. Our advertising must be engaging, must be compelling, but to say it needs to be humor or needs to have a serious nature, that is really a tonality. Wouldn't you agree?

WHW: Absolutely. It is not necessary to be humorous or entertaining. Having said that, I think humor can be used effectively to dramatize the selling message. If the humor isn't borrowed interest. If the humor is based on a way to expand, I like the word 'dramatize,' and make bigger the notion, the core issue, of what is going to potentially convince a consumer to try and purchase the brand. Humor can be very effective for that. If it is just humor for the sake of getting a laugh and isn't based on what I would call the 'focus of sale' or the 'selling premise,' I think the humor distracts from the sale. Does that make sense?

RDC: Yes, it makes absolute sense. You know, you and I are both on the same page when it comes to dramatization. And, so really, we have our strategic benefit, and we have to find a way to dramatize it in compelling customer language. Now, humor might be able to do that however, I don't want to get into tone until I see the idea and whether the idea is appropriate enough. I could not agree with you more about it needing to be relevant to the brand itself. If it is not relevant, if we are only using it to attract attention, then one would say that the objective is awareness. Kmart has awareness. Boeing has awareness. It is certainly not helping them a lot today. Awareness, to me, is nothing more than a media objective. Right?

So, let's get down to that principal reason. What do we expect our advertising to do or what should our advertising do for us?

WHW: A simple answer to that question is sell, buy, motivate, persuade, influence consumers to select our brand, the brand we are marketing over competitive brands so (that) there is at least the possibility, hopefully, the likelihood that they will try our brands and be satisfied with our brands. It is selling by another name, that is the way I think of advertising. Whether it is on social media, television, on a billboard, sky writing, the purpose is to sell or have the potential to sell more of our brand.

RDC: Yes, the purpose of advertising is to sell. David Ogilvy said, "It is not creative unless it sells," that is the whole purpose. We need to get that sale. I do believe (however) that there is a difference between a sales force selling and our selling with advertising. The sales force is very transactional in nature and advertising should be transformational in nature. It is really creating the brand and creating a preference and a reason why you should choose that particular brand over another.

When I was listening to you talk about that selling, I remember Norm Levy, he was a copy supervisor at Procter & Gamble. These folks analyzed advertising that worked versus advertising that did not work. They identified what is present in the advertising that is working that is missing from the advertising that is not working. One of the things that Norm had on his desk, in Latin, is "telling isn't selling." Which gets back to your dramatization, correct?

WHW: Yes, absolutely! You know we were very fortunate to be able to work at Procter & Gamble in the era that we did with people like Norm Levy, who studied thousands, many thousands of commercials and ads to understand the principles and techniques of how to effectively advertise. Advertise in a way to have the likelihood or the potential of getting someone to consider our brand. We were schooled both formally and informally by Norm and his team to understand how advertising worked. Those lessons, for the two of us at least, were internalized and that is the way, henceforth, in our lives, our business lives, we think about advertising and effectiveness, and not the

humor. Not that entertainment is wrong headed, but it should be in the spirit of, in the purpose of ultimately selling, inspiring, motivating a consumer to think about our brands. To transform his or her mind into “yeah, maybe I will try that. It sounds good.”

RDC: Yes, absolutely. They truly gave us proven principles and those principles are universal. As you know I have done quite a bit of work in the healthcare area, pharmaceutical, medical devices, etc. The principles are no different. You may have different ground rules in terms of regulatory and what you can say and cannot say. However, the principles remain the same. You have to have a Campaign Idea. If you do not have a set of Key Copy Words, then guess what? You are not getting the full mileage that you should be getting out of your advertising communications—your messaging. You are absolutely right, the game is (applying) proven principles that truly apply across all areas.

“NINETY-NINE PERCENT OF ADVERTISING DOESN’T SELL MUCH OF ANYTHING.” David Ogilvy

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Peace and best wishes,

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