

"Must reading for corporate advertising practitioners,
from the dean of corporate advertising."

—Frederick D. Sulcer

Vice Chairman

DDB Needham Worldwide Advertising

100

New

**GREATEST
CORPORATE**

Ads

**A TOP ADMAN'S
CHOICE OF THE BEST
IMAGE ADS**

FRED C. POPPE

FOREWORD BY AL RIES

100 *NEW* GREATEST CORPORATE ADS



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TO THE SISTERS AND THE BROTHERS
Irma, Joan, Drew, Carl, and Ed

Foreword

The art of advertising is not the same as the art of art.

Art artists constantly search for the new and different. They want to do their own thing. Art artists want to break out of conventional ways of creating images. Their success is measured by how well they achieve this goal. (Sometimes their success comes late in life, or even late in death. Vincent van Gogh, for example, sold only a single painting in his entire lifetime.)

The successful advertising artist is not free to explore the new and different for its own sake. The only function the successful advertising copywriter or art director must perform exceptionally well is the communication function. The communication problem is how to create advertising ideas and concepts the reader can quickly absorb. It's not an easy job, especially when the concept to be communicated is a corporation.

In advertising there are almost no successful ideas that are totally new. As a matter of fact, a totally new advertising idea would have difficulty penetrating the prospect's mind because the mind would have nothing to relate to. Prospects are not looking for the new and different; they are looking for ways to increase their profits, reduce their costs, and improve their productivity.

That's why every successful advertising program literally and liberally borrows from the past.

There's no secret way of creating better corporate advertising (unless hard work itself is the secret). You have to study what works and what doesn't work: which visual and verbal techniques connect with prospects and which don't; what kind of adver-

tising appeals do prospects respond to and what kind do they ignore. It's not a search for new and different art forms.

The problem is doubly difficult in corporate advertising. When you're selling a company instead of a product or a service, you must search for ways to simplify, humanize, and dramatize your message. What Fred Poppe has done is to greatly simplify your search. Some examples:

- What to do if you have a bad name. (See Wausau Insurance ad.)
- How to make friends with the high and mighty. (See *The Wall Street Journal* ad.)
- How to appeal to the financial community in a powerful way. (See Georgia-Pacific ad.)
- How to get consumer media to run your corporate ad for free. (See TRW ad.)
- How to "personify" a service business. (See General Motors' "Mr. Goodwrench" ad.)

Many novices make the mistake of studying advertising generally. They look for verbal and visual art forms that appeal to them personally. These self-indulgent creative geniuses then go out and write ads that appeal to themselves. No wonder the advertising industry as a whole is in such serious trouble.

Do yourself a favor. Before you write your next corporate ad, sit down and study the 100 latest and greatest corporate advertisements.

You'll be well on your way to writing the 101st.

AL RIES, CHAIRMAN

Trout & Ries
Greenwich, Connecticut

Preface

The history of this book starts in the summer of 1990. I was then attempting to sell an autobiographical manuscript of a book tentatively titled *The Diary of a Mad Ave. Man* to, among other publishers, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

An editor very politely, albeit very flatly, turned me down, but suggested instead that I write a sequel to my first book, *The 100 Greatest Corporate and Industrial Ads* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983). A year passed before I signed a contract to take on what I thought would be a relatively easy assignment. After all, I already had written and published one such tome. The second should be as easy as shooting ducks in a barrel.

No way!

I soon found out that things had changed drastically since my first effort. A thing called a recession had set in, and by the time I started soliciting nominations for corporate print advertisements and television commercials in September of 1991, people were more interested in saving their jobs (if indeed they had a job) than in helping their old friend Fast Freddie Poppe secure nominations for inclusion in another one of his stupid books.

The Business/Professional Advertising Association, which at one time I headed and which was a tremendous help in finding ads for my first book, was in the midst of changing managing directors and in a fiscal crisis. It would be several months before the association could let out the word that I was again looking for great corporate ad nominations. Even though I used the most up-to-date copies of *The Standard Directory of Advertisers* and *The Standard Directory of Advertising Agencies*, most of the influentials I phoned or wrote who were listed in these "Red Books" were long gone or in other jobs. A great many of the people I did reach, though extremely cooperative, had more important pigs to roast and it often took dozens of calls and letters to obtain the ads and videotapes I so greedily yearned for.

Another obstacle not prevalent in the preparation of my first book was the need for agencies to secure their client's approval

and their client's need to secure their legal department's approval. I found working *with* the bar more difficult than working *at* a bar!

On the bright side, I still had a great many friends out there, people who went to bat for me on *100 Greatest I*, helping on number II. Again, Bill Cowan, a well-known copy consultant from Waban, Massachusetts directed me to a bunch of helpful people as well as sending in scads of corporate nominations himself. Most important, Bill cheered me up and drove me on when I was about to give up. He's a super person and has a great mind.

Once the Business/Professional Advertising Association pitched in, *100 Greatest* advertisement recommendations started to arrive in quantum leaps. Some nice publicity appeared in B/PAA's house organ, *The Communicator*, and *Advertising Age* announced my quest for corporate ad submissions and, all of a sudden, people were more responsive to my frenetic phone calls and letters. The tide had turned, and I was now being aided by great numbers of helpful, wonderful people, many of whose ad agencies and advertiser companies are represented in this book.

I want to give special thanks to my son, Steven Poppe, an account supervisor suit-type at McCann-Erickson and his lovely wife Laura, who provided me with endless advice, counsel, and infallible typing services. My wife Inez's fantastic sense of humor, proofreading ability, and patience to leave me alone also deserve several medals. And my ultimate editor, Neal Maillet, who helped me get started and finished also deserves a big fat kudo as well.

It's all finally together. I've got my 100 greatest: some print, some television, and one great radio commercial. There isn't one I'm not proud of. Congratulations to all of the wonderful creative people out there who are responsible. If I've left out any names of those involved creatively, I apologize. It isn't like I haven't tried.

I'm still trying to find a publisher for my "Adthology," *The Diary of a Mad Ave. Man*. Any buyers?

FRED POPPE
West Islip, New York
December 1992

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Introduction

Corporate advertising has been called many things by many people. One thing is for sure, it's been around a long time. Chuck Peebler, the affable CEO of Bozell, Jacobs, Kenyon, & Eckhardt, Inc., said, "Corporate advertising is as old as artists' signatures on paintings in caves or petroglyphs." Other professionals are not so primeval. John O'Toole, the chairman of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, in his book *The Trouble with Advertising*, pointed out a paragraph in a 1911 booklet produced by the old Lord & Thomas ad agency: "Another problem in modern (sic) advertising is molding of public opinion. It may be for the purpose of securing a franchise. It may be to win an election. Or its purpose may be to renew the goodwill of an enterprise that has been attacked." Neal O'Connor of N. W. Ayer fame, in a speech made before the 4As many years ago, described corporate advertising as "any form of institutional message which sells no product or service but which attempts to communicate a point of view on behalf of the company which makes the product or provides the service."

The prestigious *Public Relations Journal* has been tracking corporate advertising and corporate advertising spending in special issues annually since 1971. For purposes of its survey, the *Journal* broadly defines corporate advertising as "any advertising promoting the corporation, rather than a specific product." It also includes issues advertising. These are the kinds of corporate advertisements run by companies and associations that espouse subjects including environmental, political, racial, health-care, and other issues of national and international importance.

As chimerical and difficult as it is to define and check its origin, corporate advertising is today an extremely important tool in the communications bag. Corporate advertising started to come into big-time, big-budget prominence in the early 1950s. In those days it was called "corporate con-

science" or "umbrella advertising" because most of the corporate advertisements that were run in those days were "we're-a-great-corporation-because-we-make-all-these-super-products-and-offer-great-service" ads. In the early 1950s, corporate ads were mostly all-print ads that ran primarily in publications like *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Fortune*, *Business Week*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the newsweeklies *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report*.

While the 1989 figures from Leading National Advertisers/Arbitron Multi-Media Service showed a rise of overall corporate ad spending of 11.5 percent to nearly \$1.4 billion, a corporate advertising practices survey of members of the Association of National Advertisers found that budgets in 1991 were expected to *drop* 11.6 percent from 1990. Thomas F. Garbett a former DDB Needham Worldwide staffer and a leading consultant in the corporate advertising field, who conducted the ANA study, claimed in a quote from a *New York Times* article, that "in these days corporate advertising is almost an afterthought." In the article, Mr. Garbett's ANA survey defined corporate advertising as any messages designed "not to result in an immediate sale, but to position a company for better sales." This included image advertising as well as issue or advocacy advertising and financial and investor advertising.

One important aspect to come out of the 1991 ANA survey was the fact that foreign companies were increasing their corporate ad budgets to enhance their images in the United States. In a speech before the Business/Professional Advertising Association in New York, James H. Foster, president of Brouillard Communications, a leading corporate advertising agency, claimed that among the 100 largest corporate advertisers, foreign-owned companies increased their budgets 30 percent in 1990 while domestically owned companies increased theirs only 2.6 percent—well below the media inflation rate. He mentioned that in 1983, 6 percent of big corporate advertisers were

foreign owned and in 1991 that figure went up to 28 percent. He also pointed out that Daimler-Benz's corporate ad budget increased 274 percent in 1990 over 1989; Toyota's corporate budget went up 52 percent (see page 186); BP America's, 23 percent (see page 34); Hitachi's, 32 percent; Siemens, 187 percent (see page 168); NEC's, 23 percent (see page 126); and Daewoo's, 60 percent.

The bottom line of this U.S. versus foreign corporate advertising disparity is simple. The Japanese, Germans, and other heavy corporate spenders are knocking the socks off of Americans insofar as company and brand familiarity are concerned. Foster, citing *The Wall Street Journal's* corporate report card studies, claimed that of the reputations of the largest publicly held companies in the United States (about 800 corporations in 29 industry categories), the average familiarity score dropped 47 percent in the third quarter of 1985 to 38.9 percent in 1990—a better than eight-point drop in five years.

The battle lines are clear. If a president of the United States takes a hand-picked group of America's top chief executives on an unprecedented trip halfway around the world to visit Pacific Rim countries, and Japan in particular, to drum up foreign trade, we know we've got a problem.

The cutback in corporate U.S. advertising is eroding our brand awareness in geometric proportions. It isn't just the MBAs who are "murdering brand assets," it's the chief executive officers and chief financial officers, the people who control the purse strings that curtail corporate ad budgets, who are killing brand recognition. The only answer is to spend more on promoting corporate and brand reputations and to use that money to buy the best darn advertising available.

On the bright side, the one happy factor in our favor is that U.S. corporate advertisers, on the whole, are producing far better, more creative advertising than our foreign adversaries. In my 1983 book *The 100 Greatest Corporate and Industrial Ads*,

of the 100 greatest ads that were honored, only two, Shell Oil and Volkswagen, were foreign owned and their ads were prepared by U.S. advertising agencies. On the following pages, you will see only 10 greatest corporate ads from companies that are foreign owned. And of those, nine were produced by U.S. advertising agencies.

Ads and commercials nominated to appear in both *100 Greatest* books had to meet the following criteria:

- They received large amounts of direct-response inquiries.
- They directly resulted in significant increases in sales.
- They received extremely high readership scores (e.g., Starch INRA Hooper, Readex, and so on).
- They significantly changed the perceived attitude toward a corporation or a product, as proved by benchmark research.
- They attained the accolades of professional advertising critics, editors, and peer groups.

And that was just to be *considered* for inclusion in both books!

The truth of the matter is that most of the foreign ads and commercials sent to me were so bad that I started an "awful ad file" for use in writing future articles and making speeches about what constitutes bad as well as good advertising.

The caveat here is important. While U.S. corporate ad quality is better than that of our foreign competitors, we can't really sit by and let them outspend us. We need re-nascent ad budgets as well as top creative output to compete in the United States as well as in the global marketplace.

In my first book, I featured a great corporate advertisement that was the granddaddy or grandmommy of them all. It is such a treasure, I've taken the liberty of running it here again in this, my corporate ad sequel.

All one has to do to learn what excellent corporate advertising is and what it's all

about is to read the brilliant copy in the all-type Cadillac “Penalty of Leadership” ad (see page 36) that first ran in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1915. It tells the whole story. The line, “When a man’s work becomes a standard for the whole world, it also becomes a target for the shafts of the envious few,” has a certain insightful meaning. We

taught the Japanese and other foreign sovereignties about mass production and innovative technologies, and we’ve invented a lot of important products that have been copied to a fare-thee-well.

If we don’t watch out, pretty soon they’re going to start writing and art directing good ads, and then we’ll be in really deep trouble!



American Association of Advertising Agencies

AAAA

John O'Toole, former chairman of Foote, Cone & Belding and present president and chief executive officer of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, is vitally interested in getting advertisers to increase, rather than decrease, advertising spending during a recession. He is also interested in proselytizing the ever-increasing number of decriers of advertising.

Taking a leaf from his book, *The Trouble with Advertising*, his 4As "Value of Advertising" committee launched a three-pronged public service campaign to kick some butt. The first series of ads was of the long copy variety and pointed to some pertinent statistics that espoused the power of advertising. The second phase pushed the importance of advertising during a recession.

The third and most powerful effort is the "top guns" campaign that features testimonials from CEOs of successful corporations who tell how advertising helped their companies grow. Each ad is prepared *pro bono* by the ad agency of the featured client company. McCann-Erickson produced a Coca-Cola ad for Coke's president Ike Herbert. BBDO donated an Apple Computer ad for CEO John Sculley, and Leo Burnett prepared this great one for McDonald's chairman, Mike Quinlan (left). The objective behind this corporate series was to influence the product and brand managers, who often control the advertising purse strings, to sit up and take notice.

The campaign is obviously hitting its mark, and the ordinarily penurious media is eating it up. The ads are running *free* in *Newsweek*, *Business Week*, *Forbes*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Advertising Age*, *The New York Times*, and in most of the leading daily newspapers in the country's top 20 markets.

Convinced?



When the Platte River Power Authority wanted to keep the Colorado air mountain fresh, who did they turn to?

When the Platte River Power Authority on Colorado's Front Range needed a new generating facility, they wanted it to be in strict compliance with the clean air standards of this environmentally critical region. ABB Combustion Engineering provided Platte River with a boiler installation that incorporates a tangential firing system. The result is nitrogen oxide emissions reduced to levels dramatically below those mandated by the EPA. In addition to boilers, ABB engineers a full line of power generation products, including gas and steam turbines and environmental control systems that meet every requirement of the new Clean Air Act.

Helping utilities answer the needs for economic progress and environmental protection is another example of how ABB is working to engineer a better future for America.

Asea Brown Boveri Inc.

900 Long Ridge Rd.
P.O. Box 9308
Stamford, CT 06904
1-800-626-4999

• Power Generation • Power Transmission & Distribution • Mass Transportation
• Environmental Control • Industrial Process Optimization • Financial Services

Reprinted courtesy of Asea Brown Boveri Inc.

ABB
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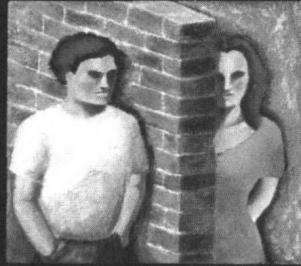
When your name is Asea Brown Boveri, Inc., you're foreign owned, you're only three years old, and as a result of a bunch of acquisitions you've become the 56th largest (unknown) corporation in the United States, it's best you change your name to ABB and start running a corporate identity campaign.

In 1990, ABB turned to its agency, Saatchi & Saatchi, and Bob Stein, the management supervisor, to identify ABB as an *American* company—to spell out what businesses it was engaged in and to inform people how well it did business. In order to incorporate a number of its U.S. companies (a part of Westinghouse and Combustion Engineering) under its corporate umbrella and to help combat a certain xenophobia on the part of its prospects in the United States, Saatchi's art director Paul Plastaras, with copywriter Glen McColgan, following an international ABB format, produced a media spectacular. It consisted of four consecutive single-page, four-color, right-hand-page ads followed by a two-page, four-color spread that ran in *Business Week*, *Forbes*, and *Fortune*.

The Saatchi creatives wisely used home-spun main illustrations of some very lovely bucolic, Andrew Wyeth-type, postcard snapshots obviously taken in America. And to back up this domestic theme, the copy featured satisfied U.S. customer case histories. The headlines extolled things like ABB's aid in keeping Colorado air mountain fresh, while the copy boasted about ABB systems meeting the requirements of the new Clean Air Act. All this in a sort of good-neighborly way.

What makes the ads stand out, besides the multiple pages, is ABB's international format: ragged left type columns, lots of leading between lines, and a very light serif typeface with considerable air between each word. The partially silhouetted, cut-out, color halftones also add distinctiveness.

When you run them all together, they adhere to the old $C + D = I$ formula, "Continuity plus Dominance equals Impact."



If you find it difficult
to talk about, write:

Aetna

When you're lucky enough to have the two top creative ad agency honchos working on your account, you're bound to come up with a corporate campaign that stands out among the clutter. Aetna Life and Casualty Company's agency, Ammirati & Puris, Inc., is run by Ralph Ammirati and Martin Puris. Both get involved in Aetna's creative output, with Ralph Ammirati taking a special interest in the print portion of the account.

Both the television and the print advertisements are directed by Aetna's participa-

tion in social and business issues. One ad is devoted to substance abuse. Another to care for the elderly. Others are on drunk driving, AIDS education, and prenatal care. These are social issues we're all interested in, and that's one of the reasons this campaign is appealing to readers. By advertising and communicating about and giving prominence to these health-care topics, Aetna hopes it will hinder the spread of disease, accidents, and problems that can cause client companies to lose employees and pay extra claims and benefits. It's not only good for Aetna's single policy holders and corpo-