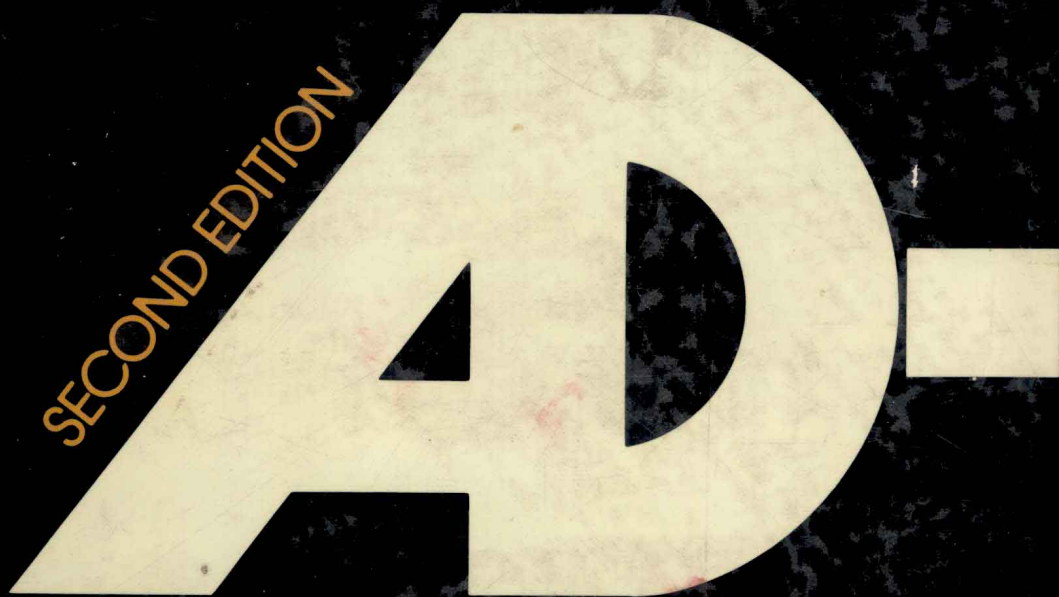




SECOND EDITION



VERTISING

William M. Weilbacher

# advertising

***SECOND EDITION***

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***Macmillan Publishing Company***

***NEW YORK***

***Collier Macmillan Publishers***

***LONDON***

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*This book is for*  
**Elizabeth Manning Weilbacher**

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Printed in the United States of America

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Macmillan Publishing Company  
866 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10022  
Collier Macmillan Canada, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Weilbacher, William M.  
Advertising.

Includes index.

1. Advertising. I. Title.

HF5821.W38 1984

659.1

83-5380

ISBN 0-02-425250-6

Printing: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Year: 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1

ISBN 0-02-425250-6

# preface

This is a book about advertising. Advertising is one of our common experiences. It is provocative, bold, colorful and lively: it is in many ways a reflection of the lives we lead. Texts about it should reflect all of this. But the subject is complicated by a variety of paradoxes. Advertising texts must deal with these paradoxes and try to unravel them.

For example, the student will have a wide experience of advertising before he or she begins its formal study. This prior experience is unique among business subjects. The student arrives in his first advertising class a seasoned observer of advertisements, with well-developed attitudes and viewpoints about them.

Let me illustrate the kind of background such students may have when they come to the introductory course. My daughter Elizabeth, age nine, was given the following assignment in her fourth-grade class:

Write a composition on *The Commercial I Dislike Most*.

Describe the commercial.

What happens in it?

How does the commercial try to get you to buy the product?

Does the commercial really tell the truth?

Do the actors treat you as though you can't think for yourself?

Have you ever bought something you saw in a commercial and then discovered it was not as good as you thought it would be?

Students' prior experiences with advertising have important implications for textbooks. In the first place, an advertising textbook must recognize that students' attitudes have been formed in a context that is personal and subjective (and, at least in some fourth-grade classes, downright hostile). Yet it is the responsibility of the text to portray a business tool that is acknowledged by businessmen to have profound usefulness in achieving the ends of commerce. In addition, it is the responsibility of such a text to describe the contribution that advertising increasingly makes to the achievement of the goals of government programs and of many of our social and nonprofit agencies. The attitudes, experiences and understandings that the student brings to the advertising classroom do not necessarily facilitate such study. Thus, the text must help the student to become objective and to set aside whatever assumptions, prejudices and attitudes that a lifetime of living with advertising has generated.

A second paradox in the study of advertising is that there is a rather wide divergence between its practice and the literature that describes and analyzes it. Practitioners do not always act as the literature says they should, nor does the literature always deal thoroughly with issues that practitioners believe to be central to their craft.

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A good example of this paradox is that practitioners believe that the essence of advertising may be found in its content: that is, in what advertisements say and show about the products and institutions that they represent. They are also deeply concerned with the strategic decisions and the creative processes that lead to the development of the advertisements to which consumers are exposed.

Yet the literature has, in general, shown little concern about the creative processes that underlie advertising, and it is thus very hard to gain insight into the subject unless one actually works at the craft. Certainly, an advertising text has the responsibility of clarifying these neglected, yet critical issues.

A final paradox is that those who are most critical of advertising seem surest about its effectiveness. This perplexes practitioners, who know that not all advertisements are equally successful, and who struggle daily to achieve a level of success that is blithely assumed by their critics. Successful advertising depends upon great skill, genuine insight and hard work on the part of advertising practitioners. But even this combination of ingredients does not always result in effective advertising. Once again, a relevant text must deal with the fact that not every effort succeeds; that advertising is hard to do; and that practitioners must continually search for excellence and effectiveness.

These paradoxes make it difficult to achieve a balanced view. The student must learn how to overcome his own experience. The student must gain insight into those aspects of commercial practice that define advertising as we experience it, yet have been ignored in the literature. Finally, the student must develop the bases of judgment that will permit him to sort out all of the issues and arguments that swirl continuously around the study and practice of this maligned and controversial subject.

In this book I have tried to unify the practitioner's view of advertising with the view of those who experience it without participating in its creation. I have striven to portray this unified whole in a way both meaningful and relevant to the student. I have respected the literature, but where it is inconsistent with practice, I have examined the

issues that underlie the inconsistencies. Similarly, I have done my best to present the case of advertising's critics, as well as to present the point of view of the business community.

Advertising is, in practice, exciting and challenging, and I have tried to suggest why this is so. I have also tried to write a book that will give a student, whatever his preconceptions, an understanding of why a consensus has developed among advertisers that advertising is, at present, worth an expenditure to them, collectively, of over \$65,000,000,000 per year.

When the student is finished with this book he or she will probably still have misgivings about some advertisements, as do I. But readers will also have a pretty good idea about the essential viewpoints and issues from the standpoint of *both* the literature and the practitioner. The reader will also learn why advertising is used, the kinds of goals that are set for it, the ways in which advertising programs are developed to achieve those goals, and as much as is known about how and why advertising accomplishes its aims. Finally, the student will be exposed to the interaction of advertising and society and the implications which that interaction has for advertising in practice and the goals of society.

No one works in an industry for thirty years without meeting many people who teach him a great deal. I have been especially fortunate in my career to have come under the influence of several outstanding practitioners and teachers. Much of what is contained in the following pages I undoubtedly learned from them, even if I cannot now remember exactly when or how. These influences include the late Raymond A. Bauer; the late Lyndon O. Brown; Marion Harper, Jr.; Donald L. Kanter; Richard S. Lessler; Darrell B. Lucas; David McCall; and Clifford H. Wolfe.

Many people helped me in preparing this book, and I am very grateful to them. Bob Coen at McCann Erickson Inc. helped me to understand the subtleties and sophistication of his estimates of advertising expenditures. John M. Otter of SSCB, Inc. consulted with distinction on broadcast media matters, and Ira Weinblatt of Dancer Fitzgerald Sample, Inc., helped in the preparation of the print media chapter. Regis Redin served as art director in the preparation of advertising for

## *Preface*

SINUGUARD, and I am indebted for her contribution.

The manuscript was reviewed at several points in its preparation. Individual reviews and the review process as a whole made a substantial contribution in revising the text toward its final form. The reviewers were:

Keith Adler, Michigan State University  
Laurence Bowen, University of Washington  
Barbara Coe, North Texas State University  
James Culley, University of Delaware  
Frederic Farrah, Temple University  
Alan Fletcher, University of Tennessee at  
Knoxville  
Donald Glover, University of Nebraska at  
Lincoln  
Donald Granbois, Indiana University  
Dean Krugman, Michigan State University  
James Krum, University of Delaware  
Thomas Leigh, Penn State University  
James Merrill, Indiana University

Herbert Rotfeld, Penn State University  
John Wheatley, University of Washington  
Eric Zanut, University of Maryland

More than one hundred individuals responded to my requests for the advertisements and advertising related materials that illustrate the text. Without exception, these representatives of their outstanding companies were enthusiastically helpful in clearing my requests through the proper channels and in supplying the materials reproduced here. If there is not enough space to acknowledge their contributions individually, I am no less grateful for it.

Nancy Munro typed revisions in the text from my incomprehensible longhand with tenacity and good will, and I am grateful for her help. Martha M. Weilbacher consulted on matters of style and grammar and, although there were tense moments and lingering points still in some dispute, it appears that our marriage will endure.

The final responsibility for the text is mine.

**W.M.W.**

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# part one

## *What Is Advertising?*

The first task is to define advertising. How people define advertising depends upon their societal and economic role and upon their prior experience with advertising. It is anathema to some, a profession to others, a business tool to many, and a persuasive presence in the life of almost everyone.

Ultimately, we will define advertising from the standpoint of those who use it and pay for it, because its use in business and social marketing defines its predominant character:

*Advertising consists of media messages paid for and signed by a business firm or institution that wishes to increase the probability that those reached by these messages will behave or believe as the advertiser wishes them to behave or believe.*



