

(1869 - - 1909)

FORTY YEARS OF ADVERTISING

A collection of somewhat intimate talks on certain Phases of Advertising, by the Largest and Leading Agency.

Dedicated to American business men who are seriously interested in the most potent and vital element of modern distribution.



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N. W. AYER & SON

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Boston, Mass. Philadelphia, Pa. New York, N.Y.

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N. W. AYER & SON
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Forty Years of Advertising

THE firm and the business of N. W. Ayer & Son had their birth forty years ago—April 1, 1869—and that is a long time, measured by American business standards.

Forty years ago this country was just binding up its wounds from a giant civil struggle, the like of which the world had not seen before—has not seen since. The first transcontinental railroad had not been finished—the telephone idea was still locked fast in the brain of its inventor—cable cars were unknown until 1873; trolley cars came fifteen years after.

Business conditions then are as unlike business conditions now as “Greenland’s Icy

Mountains ” and “ India’s Coral Strand.”

Manufacturing, merchandising, printing and publishing have all changed as much as vocations or industries can change.

Forty years ago there were about eight thousand publications of all classes in this country. The American Newspaper Annual for 1909 lists twenty-two thousand six hundred and three.

The monthly magazine, as moderns know it, was unborn. There were but a few great dailies. The weekly newspaper, now comparatively so unimportant, was then, from an advertising point of view, in the ascendency.

Advertising was unkindly viewed by the better class of business men, and publicity, for the most part, was confined to the promotion of patent medicines, tobaccos, seeds, and agricultural implements. The application of this tremendous force to the multi-form lines which it now dignifies, ennobles and promotes was not thought of.

This is, we believe, the only advertising business which, with continuity of direction, fixedness of purpose, and fidelity of intention, has spanned these four decades of growing, broadening, bettering business activity.

If the blighting banners of fogyism were raised in our camp, if our thoughts were of things as they *were*, rather than of things as they *are*, and things as they *ought to be*, the early beginnings of this house would be a handicap; but we put it as a simple statement of fact, well known to those informed of advertising affairs, and a matter of natural pride to us, that leadership in our line is more certainly ours to-day than at any time in the past, and that in this, the fortieth year of our existence, our business in dollars and cents comes not far from equalling that of our two nearest competitors combined.

Moreover, we have a greater number of accounts, a greater variety of accounts, more

successful accounts, and more unchanging accounts than any other similar concern.

These are big facts—facts fat with food for business men who do not believe in fairies.

The Slowness of Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA *is* slow — the “phunny phellow” in the latest musical comedy says so—so do the bright young men who draw pictures for the screamingly amusing barber-shop periodicals.

The story of the resident of the Quaker City who would like to eat snails but couldn't catch them has taken its place with the good old mother-in-law joke and the tale of the deceitful husband who was “detained at the office by business.”

Now, then, *that's* settled for all time—all mothers-in-law *must* be martinets—all late home-coming spouses *must* be liars—Philadelphia *must* be slow.

Our view of the "slowness" of Philadelphia differs from that of some folks.

"The mills of the gods grind slowly," and that's the sort of "slowness" that we observe in Philadelphia. It's the sort of "slowness" that is responsible for The Baldwin Locomotive Works, The Wanamaker Store, The Curtis Publishing Company, The Cramp Ship Yards, and the Philadelphia National Bank—pretty fair institutions of their kind, we are inclined to think. Remember, please, to finish the quotation above, that "The mills of the gods" also "grind exceeding small"—the purport of which is that some "slow" organizations make a pretty good job of what they tackle.

New York is not slow, but her astute business men send out more advertising through us than through any metropolitan advertising agency.

Boston is not slow, but Yankee shrewdness prompts New England merchants and

manufacturers to place through us more business than is handled by any agency in the Hub City.

There's a reason for this state of affairs, and we think that it is found in our "slowness"—for in this better sense, "slowness" parallels "sincerity," "dependability," "thoroughness," "surety."

We coined the name and have done all of the newspaper, magazine, and poster publicity work in connection with it, and to-day more men, women, and children, know, want, and buy Uneeda Biscuit than any other article sold in grocery stores. This is the work of ten years. It exemplifies rather well the type of "slowness" we stand for.

Advertising is education, and all education is "slow" work.

The "O. C. + 15" Plan

FORTY years ago the letting of an advertising contract was purely a matter of price. Most of the agencies then in existence had special lists of papers which they owned or controlled. They put advertisers into these lists of papers at as high a price as they could get, or as low a price as they had to take, and on papers which they did not control fought it out with competing agents to see who could quote the most attractive figures. Advertisers changed agencies frequently, and the whole business was on a decidedly unstable basis.

In 1873 the head of our house determined that he would change the methods of doing

advertising, or get out of the business, and from this determination was born what is now known in advertising circles as the "open contract."

He called on his customers and said to them that he wanted them to agree to the general principle that no man could continue in any legitimate business without making a profit—that he was going to try to make the advertising business clean and legitimate, and that he wanted his customer to say then and there what his profit should be. He proposed *an open contract with a fixed commission* over and above the *net* cost to the agent.

These first contracts were taken at varying rates of commission, and we have one customer who agreed to pay us 12½ per cent. above our net who has been with us all of these thirty-six years at that figure. In 1874 it was decided that our commission should be 15 per cent., and from that time

to this we have signed no fixed commission contracts at any other rate. To-day our only form of contract is "O. C. + 15," which means "*open contract plus fifteen per cent. commission.*"

An open contract fixes the terms under which the advertising is to be done, but leaves "open" the amount to be expended. It establishes relations of confidence and co-operation between the advertiser and his agent and provides a basis for working out an intelligent *advertising plan*. The plan decides the appropriation quite as much as the appropriation affects the plan.

The open contract is now in general use with other agencies, if signing it is agreeable to the advertiser. There may be other agencies which *insist* upon such a contract as a basis of their dealings, but if there are, we are unacquainted with them.

The "open-contract-plus-a-fixed-commission" arrangement did away for all time

with the temptation to use those publications which paid the agent the most commission—it removed the temptation to spend any portion of an appropriation where profits to the agent were greatest, and returns to the client frequently least.

It pulled the advertising business out of the muck and mire of bidding and faking, and made the advertising agent an agent of *the customer* rather than an agent of any publication or group of publications. It dignified and broadened the advertising business as no other single move has ever done.

Don't forget the fact that we started it, that we still cling to it, that we daily fight for it and insist upon it, and that the house which has had the courage and fortitude to take its client into its confidence, tell him the exact facts about actual costs, and charge him a definite fixed commission of 15 per cent. no matter if the publication's commis-

sion is 5 per cent. or 50 per cent., is worthy of your entire confidence.

Do not be led astray by the agent who tells you that he "charges no commission"—that he gets his commission from the publications, because it is as natural as the love of gain that he will frequently, even with best intentions, feel most kindly toward the publications which feel most kindly toward him, and express their kindly feeling by the payment of large commissions.

“Keeping Everlastingly At It”

IF the men of America were to erect a monument at the National Capital emblematic of the idea that has served us best in our national progress, it should be a gigantic figure personifying “Intelligent Persistence,” and on the base of the statue should be carved the words “Keeping Everlastingly At It Brings Success.”

This thought is the keystone in the arch of our own business—it is the fundamental idea back of the great successes which we have wrought for our clients. We have seen so many advertising failures turned into splendid successes by the application of this principle that to us it means more

than a trite expression of a mere business motto.

Persistence has conquered empires, scaled mountains, built bridges, constructed cities, and advanced civilization; and the same type of endeavor is required in large measure in advertising work, if it is to be successful.

You can't cut a giant oak down with one stroke of the ax—you must keep on chopping if you ever expect to accomplish anything. If it takes fifty strokes to fell a tree and you deliver forty-nine and quit, you have wasted your time and effort with no result. It is the last stroke on top of the other forty-nine preparatory strokes that does the business.

The business man who tries advertising and then says that advertising does not pay, quite as frequently fails because he has not tried *long enough* and *hard enough*, as he does because he has *not tried right*.

Every accomplishment in the world worth

while is the result of effort piled on top of effort—the result of “Keeping Everlastingly At It.”

Old Noah Webster worked thirty-six years to finish his dictionary. In all of that time he wrote only one book, but that book will be remembered and its author always revered as the “Schoolmaster of the Nation.”

Grey worked for more than thirty years on his “Elegy in a Country Churchyard.” He never wrote anything else of much account, but that stands to-day as the finest poem of its character ever produced in the English language.

Gibbon toiled for twenty years on his “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,” but the ages have produced nothing to take its place with the student of Roman History.

Stevenson spent seventeen of the best years of his life perfecting the locomotive, and the active principle of the great machine

that now carries us from New York to Chicago in eighteen hours is the same as his.

Avoid, as you would the plague, the type of advertising man who tells you rosy stories of certain success "just around the corner."

Sanity and experience coupled with a decent regard for the primal elements of the commonest kind of common honesty prompt us every day to advise advertisers to be prepared to "keep at it" once they start until success is in sight, and then to "keep at it" some more to hold and enlarge the success they have won.

Ayer & Son Against the Field

A WIDELY read advertising journal recently published a review of the advertising business for the past twelve-month and the name of N. W. Ayer & Son was not even mentioned.

To discuss the Declaration of Independence without mentioning the name of Thomas Jefferson; to write a review of banking conditions in New York without mentioning the National City Bank; to compile a history of the development of the American department store and leave unmentioned the name of Marshall Field, would, to any unprejudiced person, appear considerably like the play of Hamlet with the Danish Prince left out.

But to avoid all mention of the leading advertising organization in an advertising review is not peculiar at all.

Most agencies are frequent contributors to this and similar publications, but we publish no list of our customers—we make no statements of their expenditures—we give out no interviews about their plans or intentions—we simply serve them as an agent should serve his principal.

We can see no better reason for your advertising agent discussing in print your business affairs than exists for your lawyer contributing an occasional article on the legal proceedings which you have in mind, or your family doctor discussing in his favorite medical journal the peculiarities of the disease with which some member of your family may be afflicted.

This attitude on our part—which we believe to be to the benefit of our customers—is one of the things which singles us out from

all other agencies, puts us in a class by ourselves, and brings about the condition which may be described as "Ayer & Son against the field."

If this sort of service appeals to you, there is but one place where you can get it.

A large manufacturer who recently closed an advertising connection with us stated to our representative that he had been visited by a number of publication men, and solicitors from several other agencies, and that he could not avoid being impressed with the fact that on the part of most of the advertising men who had called on him there was an underlying feeling of antipathy to our house.

There is a little word which looms large in the advertising business. Publication representatives and many agency representatives thrive on it. It has only three letters, but every letter weighs heavily in the minds of a certain type of advertising man, and from

our point of view it amounts to about as much as a circle with the rim rubbed out. The word is "T—I—P."

Suppose a representative of some publication hears that a manufacturer is about to advertise, or, perchance, that an advertiser is considering changing his agent. The wise solicitor becomes very active, and passes the "tip" along the line. He "tips" off as many agents as he possibly can, and, in a good many instances, it is done with a lack of regard for the advertiser's interests which is appalling. Of course if one of these agents gets the business he would be the worst sort of an ingrate not to give a part of that business to the man who "tipped him wise."

We do not invite tips, and pay very little attention to them when they are given to us. The representative of a list of southern publications recently recommended our agency to an advertiser. We secured the account, and when the campaign actually got under

way this representative's papers were not used. He came to see us in high dudgeon because he thought we had treated him badly; but, mind you, we are the advertiser's agent, and not the publisher's agent, and we recommend an advertiser to spend his money where it should be spent, without any fear or favor.

Publication men are in business to make money, and it is, perhaps natural and logical that they should distribute their tips where they will do the most good, and that they should favor the agent who most conscientiously and faithfully rewards their industry.

There are some publication representatives who are too broad-minded and too far-seeing to indulge in this promiscuous tipping habit. They are splendid contributors to real advertising progress. These men know us, and we know them. They are not afraid to advise an advertiser to place his business in our hands, but they ask and expect no special

recognition beyond the use of their publication when an advertiser's best interests justify and warrant it.

The reason why the representatives of other advertising agencies so generally unite in their antagonistic attitude toward us lies close to the surface.

A great many advertising accounts shift about year after year, and it is no uncommon thing for an account to be in the hands of a half-dozen agencies within as many years.

As a rule when an account comes to N. W. Ayer & Son it comes to stay, because it comes on the right basis, and because we give a service which justifies its retention.

The representatives of other agencies know this fact full well and feel that if a connection is made with us the account is quite likely beyond their reach for all time. If it goes to another agency it is apt to be on the market again within a year or two, and they will have a second chance at it.

Organization vs. Personal Service

DID you ever meet an agency man who assured you that he would give you his personal service, and that, above all things, was what you and your business needed?

Of course you have. It is one of the most alluring statements of advertising solicitation. The advertiser feels flattered when an advertising man who is looking after a number of important accounts promises him that his advertising will have personal attention and personal service.

If you will stop to think a moment, you will see how fallacious this proposition really is. No man ever lived who is equally good

at all kinds of work, and modern advertising embraces many lines of effort.

No man is the best solicitor, the best plan maker, the best merchandiser, the best space buyer, the best copy writer, the best accountant, and the best detailist all in one. Human ability is not organized on that plan.

Men of high accomplishment, as a rule, excel in some line, and are correspondingly weak in other lines. This is a reason why the multiplex problems of advertising are better handled by an organization than they are by one person.

Again, expert advertising thinkers and doers are, as a class, men of brilliant conception, and brilliant conception does not always have as a complement brilliant execution.

The man who thinks most brilliantly is frequently one who will neglect most outrageously many things which he calls "mere detail," but which sap an advertising appro-

priation beyond the point of its possibly winning out.

The Pennsylvania Railroad is an organization. An individual might transport you from Philadelphia to Chicago, but no matter how brilliant and clever and capable he might be, he could not possibly compete with this splendid transportation organization in carrying you from one city to the other.

As you roll along, comfortably seated in your elegant Pullman car, you take little heed of the towermen, watchmen, track walkers, oilers, flagmen and scores of others who contribute to the swiftness and safety of your journey; but they are all a part of the organization, and were one of them to fail in his duty, the journey might come to a disastrous end.

In our house an advertising campaign is carried on by a somewhat similarly organized set of workers. Many of them are not bril-

liant—many of them never meet the advertiser—many of them have no signal capacity for entertaining or for building Advertising Castles in Spain, but they are doing their part of the work with faithfulness and ability, and contributing to the success of the advertisers' endeavor.

We have in our organization many men of the broadest advertising experience and equipment. They stand at the very forefront of *men who have done things* in this great field of activity, but we never have solicited, and we never will solicit, business on the basis of their personality or their personal services.

We give every client a service much stronger, broader and more comprehensive than any one man in our organization or in any other advertising agency could possibly give.

Expensive Accommodation

EVERY once in a while we are told that we are "too independent," that we "do not meet an advertiser's views," or that we "do not accommodate our methods to the specific business under discussion."

We have built our business by working along well-defined lines, and our unwillingness to depart from them is not because of over-independence, but because of a conviction born of wide experience, that our way is the *right way*—the *right way for our clients*, which *must* be the *right way for us*, our interests being mutual.

There is no surer fact than that the agent who concedes most to the advertiser is usually least worthy of being trusted.

We had rather lose business right than get it wrong. If an advertiser wants us to submit plans in competition with other agencies, we decline, not because we are afraid to compete, but because we believe this is an improper basis on which to determine an advertising connection.

There are very few *advertising businesses*. For the most part, general advertising agencies are simply aggregations of solicitors and ad-writers, grouped about the attractive personality of some man or men. In no proper sense are they organizations, or organisms. Settled policy is unknown—a fixed principle of operation is not adhered to—singleness of purpose is non-existent—in the stress of “the game” there is one motto and that is “get the business.”

When a man representing one of these agencies comes in contact with a prospective advertiser, he tells his story, doing all that he possibly can to accommodate himself to

the advertiser's wishes and ideas. He asks for the business on a certain basis. If the advertiser does not think it a correct one, and is sufficiently insistent, there are few agencies which will not accommodately change the basis—and this, to the advertiser, frequently proves very expensive accommodation.

We recently endeavored to secure the business of a large western advertiser who spends approximately a million dollars a year. We asked him for a connection on our well-known basis of 15 per cent. commission above net cost to us; and he, in turn, proposed our acceptance of his business on a three years' contract, we to receive 10 per cent. (the commission he was paying his present agent) the first year, "show what we could do," and, in the event of our service proving satisfactory, be paid 15 per cent. the two remaining years. We refused the business.

We ask you in all sincerity how many other agencies there are which you believe would not have accepted this proposal. To have done so, would from our point of view, have been a gross breach of confidence with all of our other advertisers who are paying us 15 per cent. commission. Our service is organized on that basis. Our net profit at that price is not as large as is the profit of most houses at 10 per cent. We would have had to slight the service of this customer, or serve him without profit, and a sense of fairness would not permit us to extend this sort of an accommodation to a new advertiser, when a great list of old customers were paying us a reasonable profit for taking proper care of their advertising affairs.

Within a year an advertiser who spends considerably more than a hundred thousand dollars in national mediums discussed with us the proposal that his business be committed to our care with the understanding

that we would take into our employ a man who had written his advertising for another agency. We told this advertiser that we solicited his business because we thought we could give him the best service in the world—we solicited it entirely apart from any consideration of this particular man. We told him that the employment of the man and the acceptance of his advertising were matters for separate consideration and we refused in any wise to consider them together.

The man sought employment with another agency, and as soon as he had secured his new berth the account followed him. We believe that there are few agencies which would have taken our attitude in this matter, but we wanted to give this advertiser better service than he had been having through the very man whom he favored. We believe that the best interests of this advertiser would have been served by making an alliance with our house, and we preferred

losing his account by taking it on what we conceived to be a faulty foundation.

We are anxious to develop our business, but we will never take a dollar's worth of business which we do not think we should have—we will never take a dollar's worth of business which does not come as we think it should come—we will never take a dollar's worth of business where we are not convinced that the connection will be mutually satisfactory and profitable.

There is a *right* way to do advertising, as there is a *right* way to do everything. We think we have found *that* way. We want all the business we can take care of which will come *that* way. We do not want *any* which must come *another* way.

We are not "Specialists"

BEWARE of the advertising man who is a "specialist" in your particular line. Specially trained and specially equipped though he may be, the very special knowledge which he thinks he possesses frequently proves a grievous handicap. He knows, or thinks he knows, so much about your business that he does not have to take into consideration any conditions or facts without the pale of his special knowledge, and you get a service based upon his knowledge and understanding—just that broad, and no broader.

We believe that we have successfully promoted more food products and grocery spec-

ialties than any other advertising house in the world; and yet we are not grocery specialists.

We have been signally successful in advertising certain textile lines, and we have men in our organization who have spent the better part of their business lives in close touch with the dry goods business; but we are not textile specialists.

We place three times as much school advertising as all of the other agencies combined, but we are not specialists in school advertising.

We forward a vast amount of business to the agricultural press of this country, but we are not agricultural specialists.

When we undertake an advertising campaign we start with the thought that the man whose business we are to handle knows more about that business than we do or ever will. We have no opinions which we want to thrust upon him. We desire only to be taken

into the proper relationship to him and his business, and, working together, provide for his business the sort of publicity that it ought to have.

We cannot do this work *for* him—we must do it *with* him. His knowledge, assistance, and co-operation is of vital necessity. We have no cut-and-dried, bound-to-succeed scheme to propose or endorse.

The agent who claims to know just how to make advertising pay is a crank or a crook, and in either case he is a party for wise men to let alone.

The agent who makes you understand that the doing of advertising is a mighty hard job and that it is getting harder every day, but who has a fine reputation for honesty, integrity and trustworthiness, and an honorable record of a big percentage of successes, is the one to tie to, and with mutual sympathy and confidence work out your advertising problems.

The Peculiar Business

FROM your point of view your business is probably "peculiar." We have come in contact with very few businesses which were not so regarded by their proprietors. If your business had not been built to fill a "peculiar" and particular need, the chances are you would not *be* in business, but these peculiarities which present themselves to you with such striking force offer no real reason for you to feel that your service or your commodity is not advertisable.

As a plain matter of fact it is very much easier to advertise a business of a character which to this time has not been advertised

than it is to exploit successfully, one which it has been demonstrated will yield to the influence of publicity.

There is no legitimate business, manufacturing an article which people want or should have, which cannot be advertised. The thought that there is not enough profit in a line of goods for advertising is frequently a fallacious one. The idea that only novelties can be so exploited and that staples are not susceptible to advertising has been proven to have no real foundation.

There are many articles which have been so splendidly advertised that were a competitor to endeavor to share its market he would have to spend ten dollars to its one to make any noteworthy impression.

There are many articles which have not been advertised at all which can command their markets in a very similar fashion if the man who manufactures them will only evince sufficient commercial and financial

courage to undertake the job, prepared to keep at it with sufficient persistence.

Peculiar manufacturing and distributing conditions frequently demand peculiar treatment, but it is the business of an agency such as ours to take these very peculiar conditions and so adjust them that the power of publicity can be properly applied.

If you have refrained from a detailed consideration of the advertising subject because you feel that the conditions under which your merchandise is made or marketed would prevent your trade-marking your goods and carrying your story to the consumer, it is high time that you had the best advertising light shed on your proposition before feeling that you have reached a settled conclusion.

The whole distributing world is adjusting itself to meet a set of conditions wherein promotive publicity plays a part, and you

may have, through the right sort of advertising, the opportunity for leadership in your line, of a character which you never could bring about through your present plan of selling.

Commercial successes bordering on the romantic have been accomplished, through the use of advertising, and it is not fair to your business to remain any longer unacquainted with an organization which has so highly succeeded in solving for many other manufacturers problems of a very similar type to those which confront you.

If you make an alliance with us you will be taken into the very best advertising company. We regard our business and our clients' business as a sort of an advertising association. Every additional client makes our purchasing power greater, our position with sellers of advertising space stronger, our experience broader, and our service more helpful.

We have erected the most remarkable advertising structure that the world has ever seen—independent, watchful, alert, competent, honest, reliable. We solicit no business from manufacturers or dealers in alcoholic beverages, no patent medicine advertising, no questionable financial or speculative propositions; but we will put our time against that of any manufacturer, no matter how large or how small, who on a business-like basis desires to give serious consideration to the problems which confront him in the promotion of his business.

Advertising Fads and Fancies

SOMEONE has called America "a nation of salesmen." It has been pointed out that Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan is really a salesman enlarged to the *n*th power.

The fascinating business of advertising has proven an attractive field for the development of the very highest type of salesmanship. A salesman sells what he *has* to sell, and unless he is a man of unusual breadth of vision and foresightedness he is more than a little likely to give scant consideration to the requirements of the buyer.

The fierce competition amongst salesmen of advertising service has quite naturally resulted in the bringing forth of a great many

special advertising ideas and thoughts as the basis for this intensive salesmanic effort. It is quite logical for an advertising agency to reason that if it can have some type of special service, captioned with an attractive name all its very own, that its soliciting staff promoting this special theory can bring in many orders.

This is the real reason for the birth of the many wonderful but short-lived advertising panaceas which we like to regard as the fads and fancies of this business.

Time was when the advertising business was, to a great extent, one of brokerage and bidding, and many agencies to-day conduct their affairs along such lines. But a score of years ago *service* began to loom large on the advertising horizon and there was much shouting on the part of certain concerns as to the superiority of the "personal service," or the "special service" which they had to offer.

Twelve or fifteen years ago there flashed across the sky a brilliant advertising meteor. He took up his quarters in New York and gathered about him a staff of clever illustrators and writers, and in stentorian voice announced his peculiar type of *service* as the one thing needful for *anyone* who *anywhere* sought to sell *anything*.

He planted and developed in a few brief months a most remarkable advertising mushroom. He advertised *himself* exceedingly well, and announced that he was soon to build a great skyscraper in the metropolis with all of its many rooms devoted exclusively to his fast-spreading business. Clients from all parts of the country flocked to him as the flies gather about a leakage in a molasses barrel.

But the bubble burst, the promise proved untrue; his very name is forgotten except to those identified with the advertising business who, in their meeting places, talk of his

spectacular coming, and his sudden going.

The last decade has been particularly fruitful of these wonderful advertising "ideas" — brilliantly conceived methods which can be applied to any business under the sun with sureness and certainty as to the outcome.

With the growth of advertising, and the consequent growth in importance of *advertising expression*, it is very natural that most of them have had *special application* to the subject of *advertising copy*.

There have come forth champions who claim to have discovered that for *all* types of business the only sure route to success is in the employment of a particular kind of copy saturated with selling thought, and with reasons wry have dinned into the ears of intending advertisers their wordy statements as to what this particular kind of copy has done, is doing, and is going to do.

Close on the heels of these advocates of

extended, detailed, explanatory, intensified statements came the preacher of "art in advertising"—art with a big "A." If he had clothing to sell, the illustration was of a man of giant stature with shoulders unusually wide, of "Gibsonesque" masculinity, towering in all his majesty above the mere picayunish men and women portrayed in normal size and natural attitude. All the world loves a picture, and this man with a message was certain that all advertising problems would be solved if the advertisements were but illustrated à la mode. This *spectacular copy* is still to the forefront, favored of many advertisers, but in itself simply one phase of the kaleidoscopic, fast-changing, fast-developing, advertising thought.

The tendency toward copy exaltation is not an unmixed evil. It is pushing into the background many men and many organizations unequipped for doing the very impor-

tant copy work which *must* be done in connection with any campaign which is to be successful. But the fundamental error of all of these copy fadists is that they endeavor to apply one particular form of treatment to widely varying business requirements.

We prepare more advertising copy than any other advertising organization in the world—copy which ranks high in its attractiveness and utility to the man who pays for it. We have promoted campaigns for advertisers which were traceably, tangibly and demonstrably of almost unbelievable success, and yet these very campaigns have been attacked by the little advocate of some new-born copy idea because they set at variance the particular method, which he, in the center of the advertising stage, was proclaiming at that particular time.

The very latest “ism” to be vigorously heralded throughout the land is the idea of

copy as the result of a conference. This is put out as the “*new* way in advertising.” We have been producing copy based upon the opinion of a committee of men met in conference for a good quarter of a century.

We have been turning out copy pregnant with selling points ever since we have had a copy staff—for certain businesses which require it. We have employed the services of the highest priced commercial artists in America—when the goods to be exploited demanded unusual illustrative treatment.

We have set more copy standards and established more copy methods and blazed more copy trails than any other half-dozen important agencies combined, but we have never been the sponsor for any *one* form of advertising presentment, and we never will be until we have only *one kind of goods* to sell, and intend to use only *one class of media*, and desire to interest only *one class of purchasers*.

It is not in our book of experience that in the selling of diamonds and the selling of fertilizer that the same line of argument or the same type of appeal is necessarily indicated.

It is our business to make advertising pay the advertiser. We have constantly enlarged and bettered our organization to meet constantly changing and shifting commercial conditions.

We are tied to no special form or method of advertising, and if we were to make a connection with a business wherein a special and new method of exploitation were necessary, our classified and concentrated experience of forty years would be our surest guide in entering the new field.

“A Fool there was—”

(and he thought he would advertise.)

ONCE upon a time there was a manufacturer who made a good line of wanted goods.

His father before him had made the same goods, in the same factory, and had built up a good reputation in his trade. The younger man pegged along for ten years and had seen his business normally develop.

But he had heard of the marvels of advertising. A fellow manufacturer at the club told him what it had done for his business. He received a special issue of an advertising journal which told a wondrous story of the accomplishments of others. The more he

thought of it, the more he became convinced that advertising was what he needed.

At this juncture he wrote to a magazine he had been accustomed to reading and asked for advertising rates, and lo! and behold! within a fortnight the representatives of a half-dozen agencies, and twice as many publications, had visited his sequestered little town and told him of the wonderful things they could do for him if he would but advertise.

He decided that the thing to do was to select an agent and he narrowed his choice to three and asked them to submit their plans. All of them were glad to do as he requested, and the solicitor of each concern called on him, bearing beautiful pictures, detailed estimates, and elaborately compiled plans.

He selected the plan which most nearly accorded to his ideas and started to advertise. He was thrilled with a feeling of

great satisfaction at seeing his name in print, and realizing that his merchandise message was being read by three million persons. He was certain that the picture in his ad was by far the prettiest and cleverest of any in the whole magazine.

His agent had represented that his services would cost nothing—that the magazines paid him a commission for getting them business. This had appeared very *alluring*. His agent had surprised him at the clever manner in which he had caught his views, and this was *more alluring*. His agent had been a particularly gracious and accommodating person, and this was *most alluring*.

BUT—

The scheme didn't seem to work, and he ordered his agent to discontinue the advertising. He has now joined the ranks of those who say that advertising may be all

right for some lines, but that it will not do for his “peculiar” business.

This is a parable, and, like all parables, the facts are a fiction, but the fiction points a fact. The fact is, that an advertiser who chooses an agent on the basis of the attractiveness of his plan, is starting on the road to failure.

Choose your agent as you would choose your lawyer or your doctor. Let the plan come after the choice has been made.

If you choose us, we are prepared to give counsel, furnish plans, select media, purchase space, prepare advertisements, register the service, and care for all details of Newspaper, Magazine, Poster and Street Car advertising.

If we accept your business, you may depend upon it that every department of this great organization will, with sincerity and dependability, earnestly endeavor to make your advertising a noteworthy success.

That's *all* we promise—but we *do* it.



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