

**socraticduck.com presents**

A Guide to Making Great Radio Campaigns

---



Great. So now that you've bought the time, what are you gonna do for a spot?

GREAT. SO NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO FOR A SPOT?

# A Guide to Making Great Radio Campaigns

---

*Many a small thing has been made large by the  
right kind of advertising.*

*--Mark Twain*

© 2013, Peter K. Presnal, [www.socraticduck.com](http://www.socraticduck.com)  
248.444.0787 • [pete@socraticduck.com](mailto:pete@socraticduck.com)

You are hereby granted a license for use of this document for your own purposes, including printing it, quoting it, paraphrasing it, using it as source material for research and term papers, and sharing it with others. Mostly, we hope you'll use its ideas to improve the effectiveness of your business's advertising. You cannot, however, claim this work as your own, sell it to others, create derivative works, or otherwise plagiarize it in whole or in part without our express, written agreement. When you quote, and/or share this document with others, kindly cite Peter K. Presnal as its source.

<http://www.socraticduck.com> is owned by Peter K. Presnal and may not be used without permission. All other rights reserved.

# Table of Contents

## INTRODUCTION

Introduction	iii
How to get the most out of this booklet	iv

## CHAPTER 1

The Theory	1
Effective Advertising Require 3 Things	4

## CHAPTER 2

The Third Thing First	5
Target Audiences, Defined	6
There's Another Way	7
Formats Defined by Their Utility	9
Adult Contemporary (AC)	9
Country	10
Rock/Pop/Contemporary Hit Radio	10
News/Talk/Full Service	10
Urban/Rhythm and Blues	11

Jazz	11
Classical	12
Christian/Religious	12
Spanish	13
Specialty and Long-Form Programming	13

## CHAPTER 3

The Creative	14
A Quick Story	16
Know What You're Selling	17
State the Benefits	19

## CHAPTER 4

So, the Rules Are These	27
-------------------------	----

## CONCLUSION

The Final Word	31
----------------	----

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

Introduction

## Introduction

*The purpose of business is to create and keep a customer.*

*--Peter Drucker*

*Is it not true that very day you're open for business, you're running for election?*

*--The Socratic Duck*

**S**INCE YOU'RE READING THIS, chances are you've purchased time, or are seriously considering purchasing time, on the most powerful, effective and cost effective mass medium that's ever been invented: The Radio. Not that we're suggesting you need to do everything yourself, but it *is* your advertising we're talking about. Therefore, this guide is intended to help you discover how great radio advertising is created (especially for the relatively little money you spend compared to, say, newspaper or TV) so that you can, one, understand what the people who create your ads are trying to do, and, two, help you to help them by giving you the right questions to ask and answer. We'll give you a little background on various formats for purposes of comparison, but the main thrust of



GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE  
TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR  
A SPOT?

what we want to cover here is to demonstrate the importance of creating very effective commercials. It is the commercial *itself* that is the single most determining factor in the success or failure of an advertising campaign. We'll show you the whys and wherefores of effective ads. We've posted the examples we cite to demonstrate our concepts at [socraticduck.com/radio](http://socraticduck.com/radio), and as you read, this guide will ask you to stop for a minute and play the appropriate example.

## How to get the most out of this booklet

There are three basic sections. The first (Chapter 1), deals with some basic theory and a few ideas and concepts to keep in mind.

The second section (Chapters 2, 3, and 4), deals with the practical parts of planning an ad campaign for the radio - although you should note that, except for certain details, much of the practical material here has application in just about any medium. This is the section that most takes advantage of the [socraticduck.com](http://socraticduck.com) Website so that you can hear the radio examples we cite. Look for this symbol:



...it means go to <http://www.socraticduck.com/book.html> to find the spots.

The final section (the appendices) will provide you with some tools and resources you can use to design your program, which will come in really handy as you explain to your account rep what you want to accomplish.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

Chapter

1

## The Theory

*If an ad campaign is built around a weak idea -- or as is so often the case, no idea at all -- I don't give a damn how good the execution is, it's going to fail. If you have a good selling idea, your secretary can write your ad for you.*

*--Morris Hite*

**B**EFORE WE DIVE INTO the detail, you need to keep in mind a few very important points - not the least of which is, that when it comes right down to it, *nobody cares* about advertising. In people's priority lists of what they need to do every day, eating, sleeping and keeping a roof over their heads are generally at the top of the list, while paying attention to advertising is pretty near the bottom - except, of course, when they're in the market for something. Then they start to pay attention - *if* you give them something worthwhile to pay attention to. Especially if you've been giving them a steady diet of it well in advance of their entering the market.



Secondly, you need to remember what the job of advertising is. Advertising must *sell*, but it does not, repeat, does not supplant active person to person selling. Advertising is merely where the entire buying--selling process begins. Advertising tells your story to large numbers of people at a time, rather than having to, say,

---

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

go door to door talking to them one at a time. That is to say, it multiplies your selling efforts. Advertising's job is to make the offer, make the promise, and attract prospects to your doorstep by allowing them to see themselves enjoying the benefits of your product or service. It is advertising that creates face-to-face *opportunities* to effect a transaction (even if we're talking about virtual face-to-face over the Internet). Thus, you can readily see that advertising can be a make or break sort of proposition.

Of course, all this presumes that you've got a good business to begin with; that you're equipped to handle the orders; that you can fulfill the promise you make; that you provide products or services of such desirability and quality that people are willing to part with their money in the first place. The greatest ad campaign ever created can't save a business that's dying because it's run badly, treats its customers poorly and commits other similar sins. The most advertising can really do is persuade people to give it (your product or service) a try. After that, it's up to you to turn them into paying customers who keep coming back for more.

**Can advertising foist an inferior product on the consumer? Bitter experience has taught me that it cannot. On those rare occasions when I have advertised products which consumer tests have found inferior to other products in the same field, the results have been disastrous.**

**--David Ogilvy**

Third, understand that advertising isn't science, despite what many would have you believe. This is not to say, you can't use science in its creation or analysis, but, if advertising *were* science, one could rely on some sort of Advertising Laws and Theories, and it would work pretty much as predicted. Instead, gut counts. Many, if not all, great business successes were the function of a visionary who believed he had a powerful idea, none of which, it turns out, were created scientifically. Who knew they needed a Ford Mustang until Lee Iacocca created it? Or for that matter, what regular Joe figured cars were anything but playthings for the rich until Henry Ford built one for the masses? Who knew drinking oddly named, over-priced coffee in a pretend European coffee shop would be *de rigueur* prior to Starbucks? Who among us, born before, say, 1985, would have thought anybody would have a need for an Apple Macintosh or IBM PC? Which is to say what makes powerful *advertising* is powerful *ideas*.

Fourth, you must also truly and thoroughly understand what you're

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

selling, which is to say it's not necessarily the physical stuff. People only buy one thing: a solution to a problem. And any unmet need is a problem - although sometimes you have to make people aware that they have a problem; see the paragraph above. (By the way, there's no such thing as a "want." There's only need: "But you don't understand! I NEED a red Corvette!") There's an old advertising adage that goes something like: **People don't buy drills because they want drills. They buy drills because they want holes.** People make purchases because the product or service in their minds fulfills some need, that is, solves some problem. They then create the logic and rationalization in order to justify the purchase. Want proof? Go to any street corner where there's more than one gas station. The station that's selling gas for ten cents a gallon more than the one across the street can have as many cars at its pumps as the others. How can that be? Logic should dictate that, all things being equal, the only gas one need buy (and the only gas that should be selling) is the lowest priced gas. But all things aren't equal. *Hey, this one's better quality.* (Is it? How do you know? Are you a chemist?) *It was on my side of the street* (thereby filling an emotional need for convenience or perhaps safety). *They've got those electronic do-hickey things that I just have to wave at the pump; There are fewer turns; I don't have to fight as much traffic.*

(This gas station example, by the way, demonstrates another important point. Namely, price isn't the only, or perhaps even the primary consideration in making purchase decisions. If one truly understands what the prospect is actually buying, and keeps that need/solution in front of him, then the seller can force the price issue down (ideally to the bottom of) the consideration priority list, because you've shown that your product or service is the one that best fills the need. If you make people want yours badly enough, they oughta pay almost anything to get it.)

**Advertising must connect with the prospect emotionally.**

There isn't a person alive who's purchased something purely on fact and logic. Decisions to buy are made emotionally. It's after the fact that we develop the logic and sensibility of our purchase. "Well, of course I bought a red Corvette. I already had a blue one. Besides, the guy gave me a great deal." Get the picture? Grab them by the heart

Finally, to make advertising effective, the advertisement must connect with the prospect emotionally. All buying and selling is emotional by nature - because human beings are emotional by nature.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE  
TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR  
A SPOT?

and you can take their minds anywhere. To give you a sense of what we're talking about, the first spot we want to play for you is an example of an extremely emotional (and by the way, very effective) commercial.



Brighton Hospital, "Dear God..."

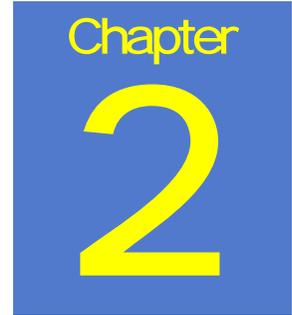
So, do you sell drills, or do you sell the best way to make holes?

## Effective advertising requires three things

First, a strong selling message or promise. Second, one must create the ads in such a way that the prospect responds by making the purchase. Lastly, effective advertising must appear in front of the desired prospects. In other words, you only have to say the right thing the right way to the right guy.

Let's start with the last thing on our list first, since the main point of this presentation is about what and how, rather than to whom.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?



## The Third Thing First

*I warn you against believing that advertising is a science.*

*--Bill Bernbach*

**W**E GUARANTEE YOU THE following conversation has never taken place in the history of commerce:

**SALES PERSON:** Hi, welcome to Uncle Eugene's Widget Factory. What brings you in today?

**CUSTOMER:** Well, I am a Person 25 to 54, and I heard your radio ad say that your company caters to my demographic.

**SALES PERSON:** Why yes we do! Let me take you over to the Person 25 to 54 department and show you around.

**CUSTOMER:** I'm so glad I'm dealing with a company that truly caters to my demographic.

That's why where you put your ad isn't quite as important as what you say and how you say it. If you don't do an ad that your prospect sees



GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

him- or herself in and enjoying the benefits of what you sell, you're gonna be ignored. And being ignored does not strike us as a particularly effective advertising strategy.

## Target Audiences, Defined

TARGET AUDIENCES ARE TYPICALLY defined in demographic terms, primarily as age and gender cells: "Men, 18 to 49" or "Persons, 25 to 54" or "Women, 35 plus" or some other similar description of a group of people. You can further refine the description of the target by adding such characteristics as education level, geographic location, race or ethnic descriptors, marital status, and other similar objective measures of groups of people. The objectivity of demographics is what makes it so attractive.

Yet, it's also wrong, or at least backwards, since, when you define a group of people as, say, Persons, 25 to 54, you're presuming that one



35-year-old person is just like another, or that a 25-year-old male is just like his 54-year-old mother. Or, to put it another way, what magical transformation happens to a person's consumptive behavior on either or both of his or her 25<sup>th</sup> and 55<sup>th</sup> birthdays? (I was born on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. My consumer habits on the March 4<sup>th</sup> following my 25<sup>th</sup> birthday didn't seem all that different from my consumer habits two days

earlier, and yet, I was in one demographic cell on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and a whole different one on the 4<sup>th</sup>.) Common sense says this is utter nonsense. With six billion people in the world there are simply too many possible variations of psychological make-up (particularly with respect to wants and needs and how to fill them) to construct a definitive "target demo," as generally defined, of any real value. The logical fallacy is that, while you may see that the buyers of a particular thing may cluster around one or several demographic cells, you can't necessarily assume it works the other way: all people in demographic cell A are buyers of product B.

Targets and audiences are also defined in psychographic terms: want and need, lifestyle, purchase preferences, buying motivations and so on. Defining target markets in psychographic terms makes a little more sense, since it goes more to the whys and wherefores of peoples' reasons for making purchases. As it happens, there is more commonality among people who are in the audience of a given station

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

in a psychological sense than there is in a strict demographic sense. It's basically a case of birds of a [psychological] feather flocking together.

The advertising/media industry considers matching demographic and/or psychographic definitions of a company's target market to that of the various media outlets (that is, trying to reach the right people) as the basis of determining which space and time to buy. We contend this is much less critical than is generally believed - at least in the way demographic and market segments are typically defined or described. The problem as we see it is that advertisers tend to define markets in terms like, "Men, 18-24," "Women, 25-54," and "Persons, 12 plus" (meaning people 12 years old and older; sorry, but "Persons, 12 plus" is not a demographic, it's a family reunion). As long as there are sufficient numbers of people in a given station's audience who have the financial wherewithal and can be convinced or persuaded to come buy what you have to sell, then any one of them will do. Who cares if it's a 70 year old female or a 22 year male who wants to buy one of your watches? If they've got the money, you're happy to sell them the watch, right?

**"Persons 12+" is not a demographic; it's a family reunion.**

This is the reason the commercial itself is the most critical component in the whole shebang. After all, if it was powerful enough to convince enough people to eventually do enough business with you that you make a decent profit, does it really matter where the spot ran? So, again, we argue that one need not spend many sleepless nights fretting about "whether or not I'm on the right station." Chances are, you are on the right station as long as you can convince enough members of that station's audience to come do business with you so that it ends up being a profitable venture in the end.

Therefore, we define the "right guy" as the person who both has the money and predisposition to do business generally, and can be persuaded to do it with you specifically.

That's why you *have* to have a really good set of spots.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

## There's another way

A MUCH BETTER WAY to target potential customers, then, is to define them as people who own the problem you've designed your product or service to solve.

This is a very important distinction since it impacts greatly the "what" and the "how" of your commercial messages.

Having said that, it's certainly true, to use the old saw, birds of a feather do tend to flock together. It's a whole lot closer to the truth to say the members of the audience of a given station have a lot more in common attitudinally with other members of that same audience, in that they probably have similar frames of reference, similar mores, values, beliefs, even similarity in their behavior as consumers (which is of course, of most interest to an advertiser). And one can safely say that there's a discernible attitudinal/behavioral difference between the audiences of, say, the Christian station versus the one that broadcasts a well known shock jock, or the country station versus the hip-hop station, etc. But it's also true that any two radio stations will share a certain percentage of audience. Which is why "being on the right station" isn't as critical as generally thought.

And even in the absence of research data, at least with radio stations, one can make some fairly safe if broadly generalized assumptions about stations and what makes sense about the types and kinds of business that are likely to succeed. For example, it certainly makes little sense for a topless bar to advertise on a Christian station. And you're probably going to sell more Lincolns and Rolex watches on a classical or all-news station than you are on a dance oriented Top 40. If you're selling acne cream, stick to stations that play a lot of records that are popular with teens. But beyond those kinds of fairly obvious considerations, *choice of stations isn't a life or death sort of thing.*

Now, if you still want to buy media in an "objective and scientific" way, there are all sorts of media usage research and reporting organizations out there that claim reasonably accurate qualitative and quantitative data that show who hears, sees, and reads what, when, where, why, and how. That information usually gives you the ability to compare stations in terms of financial efficiency, that is, to compare how many people you get to talk to dollar for dollar. These are the companies



GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

that provide "the ratings." The more well known are the Nielson reports (<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en.html>) (for TV and internet), Arbitron (<http://www.arbitron.com>) (for radio) and the Audit Bureau of Circulation (<http://www.accessabc.com>) (for newspapers). These same organizations can also supply qualitative data from companies like Scarborough Research (<http://www.scarborough.com>). If the media outlet subscribes to these sorts of services, your rep can show them to you, and explain how to calculate such things as Gross Ratings Points or Cost per Thousand. Or, for a fee, you can buy the reports directly from the organization(s) you're interested in. Or,

**Practically any station can work. What counts is whether your commercial can motivate people to come see you.**

since we're talking about radio, you could rely on the following guide to radio formats and what typically works in terms of business prototypes. Remember two points as you read. First, all stations can be effective, so the decision about which station to use has more to do with appropriateness, context, fit

and environment rather than effectiveness (none of which ratings address). Secondly, if you have to choose between reach, (that is, how many people you get exposed to at any given time), and frequency, (that is, how many times you get to talk to a given set of ears), opt for frequency. You can always generate cash flow from the first daypart or station you buy time on in order to purchase time later on a second one and so on.

## Formats Defined by Their Utility

**ADULT CONTEMPORARY (AC):** This is generally the format with the most broadly based audience. It's the one that assiduously avoids controversy or the risk of offending anyone. It's probably the most "family friendly" of the mainstream formats. If retail businesses play the radio in the lobby or selling floor, more often than not, it's an AC station they're playing. There probably isn't a whole lot you couldn't sell on one, but the most logical would be mainstream consumer categories: food and groceries, restaurants and hospitality venues, cars, mortgages/equity loans/real estate, most retail prototypes, services like hair care, health care, legal services,



GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

especially family law and bankruptcy, home improvement, furniture/carpet, etc. Avoid AC if you're in a business that could be considered of questionable taste or morality, "gentlemen's clubs," or beer, for example. AC skews female in audience composition.

**COUNTRY:** Not much different from adult contemporary, except that its audience generally has a slightly lower level of financial wherewithal. Especially good for pick-up trucks, outdoor (sports, hunting, fishing) sorts of things. And you can probably more easily sell beer on a country station than an AC. Probably not the place for four star restaurants listed in Zagat's or The Michelin Guide, but low to mid range restaurants would probably do well. The Country audience is fairly evenly split between male and female. It tends toward blue collar, working class and non-urban types; probably more hearth and home, therefore tends to be more conservative.



**ROCK/POP/CONTEMPORARY HIT RADIO:** There's a gazillion permutations to these formats. There's active rock, album oriented rock (AOR), classic rock, oldies, alternative, adult alternative, dance, all hits, pop, contemporary hit radio (CHR), and sub genre within each of those.

Because of the popularity of rock music (everything from Elvis Presley to Elvis Costello), most business prototypes will work. But nonetheless, Rock formats are especially good for beer, bars, cars, and motorcycles. Maybe not the first choice for business-to-business advertising - but then nothing here is written in stone. Rock, album rock and classic rock formats skew male - rock younger, classic rock older. Rock formats are especially good for guy stuff (think motorcycles and beer).



Audiences of Oldies formats tend to be close to 50/50 male/female, and are also a bit more affluent than rock and classic rockers, if only because the audience is a few years older. Alternative is also pretty much a 50/50 mix, and has its strongest audience among people born after the Viet Nam war. They tend toward the new and novel. They're typically younger, educated people, who consider themselves hip and in touch with current trends and fads. Alternative and Adult Alternative are great places to sell Hondas and Volkswagens, for example. CHR, particularly in its dance oriented versions tends toward younger, female audiences. Also a great choice for Hondas and VWs, hip restaurants, clubs, clothing stores like The Limited or

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

Old Navy, and acne medicine.

**NEWS/TALK/FULL SERVICE:** All-news stations have a fairly broad audience, as well, but their core audiences tend to be older and bit more upscale than the population generally - they tend to parallel those of newspapers. Talk stations also tend to skew fairly old: 35+ and very male. Both formats are considered especially good for business-to-business advertising, for financial services, more upscale products and services. These are great formats to sell full size and luxury vehicles, boats and vacation places. Mainstream to upscale and four-star Michelin-listed restaurants should do well on these formats. (A note of caution about all news stations, especially ones that have traffic and weather reports at regular and frequent intervals: TSLs (Time Spent Listening) can to be short. That's because a large portion of the audience tunes in for the traffic and tunes back out as soon as they get it. If you're using an all news station for its reach, then you must have a very heavy schedule to insure you get decent frequency.) One version of Talk, sports talk, owns the most upscale of all radio audiences. Though generally fairly small, sports talk audiences are almost exclusively male, and invariably very well off financially. Full service stations are probably better considered in terms of their various programs or dayparts - use them more in the way one would use a broadcast TV station. That's because each program appeals to often quite disparate audiences. A business oriented morning show will likely appeal to a very different audience, at least psychographically, than that of, say, the hockey game, even though both are on the same station. This should be seen as a possible advantage, in that it's like there are several "mini-stations" within the same station.



**URBAN/RHYTHM AND BLUES:** Urban has fragmented enough that its various forms, Urban, Adult Urban, Hip-hop, Classic Soul, R&B, etc. have audiences that mirror Rock/Pop/CHR, except that the audiences have a much higher concentration of African Americans. To the degree that African American consumptive behavior tracks with the population generally, station decisions should be based on the same criteria as would be used for any station.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

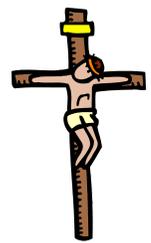
To the degree that there is consumptive behavior that is unique to African Americans, then Urban and R&B formatted stations are a natural choice. Urban and Hip-Hop stations skew young, Adult Urban and Classic Soul skew older.

**JAZZ:** Jazz comes in at least two flavors: Jazz and Smooth Jazz. Real jazz stations, if they still exist, tend toward having upscale audiences of people who were born primarily between World War One and World War Two. Core artists are folks like John Coltrane, Miles Davis, The Jazz Messengers, Dizzy Gillespie and so on. Smooth Jazz is really a permutation of Adult Urban or Adult Contemporary, or even an amalgam of the two, using jazz influenced music, especially instrumentals. Its popularity cuts across many demographic cells, although skewing African American. Most prototypes should work well on this format.



**CLASSICAL:** The audiences of classical stations tend to be relatively small but very upscale. Generally, listeners are well off financially, well educated and have good and expensive taste (or at least expensive taste). Excellent place to sell high end anything: cars, watches, electronics, computers, wines, houses, financial services, restaurants, boats, planes, travel and tourist related things (cruises, airlines, destinations, resorts, etc.), business-to-business and such.

**CHRISTIAN/RELIGIOUS:** This is the most popular of the niche formats. Nowadays it comes in flavors that are basically Christian versions of the mainstream formats. The audiences of Christian AC and Christian Rock stations have an overall tendency to be working to middle class, usually suburban whites, who tend to be on the right-wing of the political spectrum. They generally hold conservative social and political views, are very family oriented and active church goers. The audiences of various Christian formats mirror those of their secular counterparts. There's not a whole lot of qualitative difference between the audience of, say, a Christian AC vis-à-vis a secular one. In fact, compare the audience of a given Christian station to a secular station with the same formatic style (Christian AC vs. secular AC, for example), and you'll find a large portion of the Christian station's audience also listens to the secular station, although not necessarily

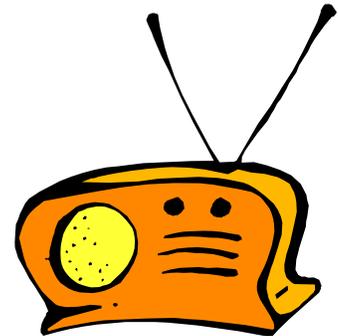


GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

the other way 'round. As consumers, however, Christian station listeners are pretty much like that of all stations. Note, however, businesses that deal in B, C, D credit situations (like "special financing" departments at car dealers, or mortgage companies doing a lot of debt consolidation), credit repair, bankruptcy attorneys and low buck stuff like mobile homes seem to do especially well. One thing Christian stations have going for them is that, although their audiences aren't that big in terms of raw numbers, the listeners tend to more actively seek out those businesses that advertise on these stations, presumably because the audience assumes that any company that advertises on a Christian station must itself be run by Christians, and therefore is assumed to be better a company to do business with. A particular form of religious radio, called Gospel, and aimed at African-Americans, is to urban radio what Christian AC/pop/rock is to secular AC/pop/rock.

**SPANISH:** These days, they're basically the same as the "English" stations, except that they do it *en Español*.

**SPECIALTY AND LONG FORM PROGRAMMING:** This is a type a programming that can be found on any station and at any time, though you'll more typically find it on talk and full service stations or on weekends on the music stations. Usually, these are talk-type shows or music showcases, many times with listener participation, that aim at particular interests; cars or home improvement or cutting-edge rock music, for example. It would also include broadcasts of college and professional sports games. They are excellent vehicles for targeting people who share common interests (namely that of the show). For example, if you're in, say, the car parts business, you'd definitely would want to consider sponsoring a weekend car repair program; likewise a lumber yard or hardware store would want to seriously think about advertising on a home improvement program. Stations design these kinds of programs specifically for matching interests to advertisers. Ask your station reps about these kinds of opportunities and think seriously about including them in your overall plans. It's entirely possible that if it doesn't already have something, the station may obtain or invent a program you can sponsor specifically to draw an audience of pre-disposed, interested prospects.



GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?



## The Creative

*It is insight into human nature that is the key to the communicator's skill. For whereas the writer is concerned with what he puts into his writings, the communicator is concerned with what the reader gets out of it. He therefore becomes a student of how people read or listen.*

*--Bill Bernbach*

**P**EOPLE THINK IN TERMS OF cost versus benefit in practically everything they do, whether they do so consciously or unconsciously - so much so, that one can make the case that there's a cost-benefit equation for something as automatic as breathing. The cost of breathing is the caloric expenditure required to contract the diaphragm, take in air, extract the oxygen, and expel the carbon dioxide waste product. The benefit is one gets to stay alive a few moments more.

Determining a good selling message (saying something worthwhile) requires a thoughtful examination of the reasons you're in business. You must answer the question, *Can you solve my problem, and how?* That is to say, you must look around your business and settle on the thing(s) that makes your particular product or service the only solution worth considering. The worthwhile thing you say is your promise or offer. Looked at another way, your promise or offer is the reason you

---

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

give your customers to come and get what you've got - to choose you over your competition.

The things that make your company different are many times found in the very reason you started your business in the first place. Ask, what was it that caused you to believe you could create a better product than what already existed, or, improve an existing product? What brilliant idea did you get that solved a problem nobody had been able to before, thereby creating a whole new market in which you could be the first? What was the idea you had that said to you here's an approach so new and novel that it redefines the marketplace? If you're a retailer, what makes your store better or unique? Is it greater selection? ...lower prices? ...better, more personalized service? ...more brand names? ...more generic names? ...thicker carpet? ...more locations? ...selling over the Internet? If you're a manufacturer, why is your product different, worthier of purchase or more special than the other guy's? Is it new? ...faster? ...cheaper? ...more efficient? ...is the paint brighter? What did you think up, invent, create, and/or develop to benefit potential customers? What problems are you able to solve? What are you doing to generate customers now (what is the benefit you promise in order to sell your product or service)? What are you willing to do later today? Tomorrow? Next week? Next year? What, then, is the message you want to impart - the promise you're willing to make - the solution you have to offer? What do you want to be synonymous with? Find that "thing," (or things) and you're well on your way to creating a great radio ad campaign. But, as you ask yourself these questions, answer them from your customer's point of view. After all, if what you think is important turns out not to be to the folks you want as customers, then you have nothing worthwhile to say.

**Your potential customer wants to know: Can you solve my problem? And can you solve it as a price I'm willing to pay?**

*Your promise or offer is worthwhile only if it is important to your customers or the people you want for customers. It is the worthwhile promise or offer that is the most valuable thing you can give your copywriter.*

Think about your message or promise in the context of competition. There's always somebody else trying to build a mousetrap that's better than yours. Your job is to make sure it's your mousetrap the customer

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

wants to and ultimately will buy. Therefore, you must analyze the benefits of your product or service, determining those things that make it different from the competition.

This next example is a commercial for Avis Ford of Southfield, Michigan. Notice the highly competitive message simply and powerfully delivered.



### Avis Ford, "The Service is Built In"

Did that seem like a simple idea creatively and convincingly conveyed? As long as Avis continues the program, they can position themselves as a very service oriented dealership, and never once have to sell a car on price and payment. Because they're first with it, the Service is Built In idea gives them a very marketable uniqueness.

It may seem like analyzing one's company in terms of its uniqueness in the context of competition is, to the business person, obvious and done as matter of course. However, it's amazing how many business owners and managers forget this vitally important step. They forget or don't consider how it is they're going to find customers, even at the inception of their companies. (I'm amazed at how many people start companies and never appear to ask, What can I sell that enough people are likely to buy that I can make a living? When there's no consideration of "How do I get my customers?" it's not likely the company will become the great big company its founder dreams about.)

## Know what you're selling

WHEN YOU UNDERTAKE ANY advertising or marketing campaign, you must truly understand what it is you're selling - because that's what your advertising message needs to be: that you and only you have the right solution to your prospect's problem (remember, any unmet need is a problem). For example, what we're selling here is a way to make your radio advertising dollars go farther, by explaining the proper use the medium. We want to show you how to get the most possible work out of your ads so that they produce the maximum opportunity to generate the maximum amount of profit. We may *make* radio ads, but

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

we sell profit opportunities. See the difference?

Once you've figured out what you're really selling, this is the core message for the spot, indeed the campaign. Anything that doesn't materially advance or support the core message is to be ignored. (*"Gee, they didn't say whether or not they were going to have hot dogs at their sale. Maybe I'd better not waste my time, 'cause how do I know if it's real sale if they don't mention free hot dogs and*

**It takes a big idea to attract the attention of consumers and get them to buy your product. Unless your advertising contains a big idea, it will pass like a ship in the night. I doubt if more than one campaign in a hundred contains a big idea.**

*balloons?"* is probably not a thought that your potential customer is likely to have.) Leave out any and all cereal filler. Leave out anything that's irrelevant or immaterial or not germane to the promise, offer or selling message, or perhaps more accurately, the prospect's buying motivation.

**--David Ogilvy**

When people decide they're in the market for something, they're thinking about a need (or set of needs) that has to be filled or a problem (or suite of problems) to be solved, and how and by whom they'll get it (them) filled or solved. Nobody ever decided to shop for a car and thought, "Hm. It's time for a new car. I need to find a dealer who has an inflatable dinosaur on the front lawn and has balloons in the lobby." Or as Roy Williams puts it in his book, "Yes, I'm here because of the gorilla on your roof and the hot dogs I heard you advertise on the radio. And now that I see you're an automobile dealer, I have a sudden urge to buy a car." In determining your message, you must begin in the prospect's mind: Understand her buying motivation, then create a promise that addresses that motivation. The old business adage is "find a need and fill it." That's what lead to the creation of your company. Why would you stray from that in your advertising?

If you (or the people who create your advertising) can't emote for a measly sixty seconds about how you can solve your prospect's problems without resorting to contrivances and clichés, then maybe you need to re-think why it is you're in business in the first place. Sorry to be so blunt.

Listen to these next two commercials; they're from a Detroit (MI) area restaurant chain. They're selling the quality of their food, but the copy avoids the usual clichés that restaurant spots generally contain. What they do instead is tell the story behind the ingredients and

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

thereby provide evidence as to the quality of the food.



### Sveden House, "Chickens" and "Idaho Fish"

Effective copy requires each spot to have and to stay with a single selling message. Any ad or commercial that contains more than a single selling idea is doomed to failure at least in terms of achieving maximum results. To help you in checking to make sure your copy for any given spot is limited to one thing, here's a little theory and a couple of examples to serve as thought starters.

The concept of single selling message is not limited to the selling of a single piece of physical merchandise, as one might suppose. "Single message" can be something like low price, a proprietary program, a special brand of customer service, locations, reputation, a unique attribute or characteristic, and so on - anything that can be viewed as a genuine benefit to a potential customer; something that is of greater perceived value than its price or cost (that cost-benefit equation we've heard so much about).

When we identify the single selling message - we need to be sure, first of all, it is something for which a large enough market exists. That is to say, are there enough prospects in the available pool who can be motivated to purchase the goods or services we're selling?

Once that message is identified (and, to be sure, you may have more than one thing to sell), it needs to be expressed in terms of real benefit to the prospect. If, for example, the message is identified as the luxury of a Lincoln MKZ, then the benefit of that luxury needs to be clearly stated and more than once if possible. If the one thing is say, longevity in business, then the benefit of that longevity must be made clear in a way that motivates the prospect to make the purchase. Use that singular idea to show the prospect enjoying the product or service.

Here are a couple of ads for another auto dealer as examples of a single selling idea. The dealership's core message, "we guarantee financing for everybody," is clearly communicated quite effectively and powerfully. Again note that these spots avoid the usual clichés, and don't take what can seem like the default dealership approach shouting at customers. There's a fair amount of theater-of-the-mind,

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE  
TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR  
A SPOT?

yet the entertainment doesn't overwhelm the message.



Cueter Chrysler/Jeep; "Lewis and Clark" and "Hannibal"

Identity of the selling message comes from the advertiser; that is to say, only you (as the advertiser) can say what the selling message is. Any self-respecting copywriter will not (and cannot) invent a sales idea or create a promise in a vacuum; one that's utterly unconnected to the core of the advertiser's firm. To do so invites disaster. Therefore, while *how* the message is said is a more the purview of the writers and producers, the "what" of it is the advertiser's and the advertiser's alone.

Smart advertising people identify selling messages and determine whether or not they're worth developing entire campaigns from *with* the client. Only you as the business owner/operator know what really sells or what you make your money on. Unless and until everyone is agreed that there really is a message that's worth expending dollars on for radio time, then no way should it appear in an ad.

Moreover, if more than one message comes to the fore as having real profit possibilities, then each deserves to be developed as its own campaign, worthy of a legitimately sized advertising investment. Certainly, every true selling message needs its own commercial. Any attempt to include more than one selling idea in a single commercial is diluting the power of the commercial by several orders of magnitude. We implore you to resist the urge.

Identification of the selling message is done from the point of view of the prospect. That is to say, it must start so that in the mind of the prospect it offers a real and identifiable benefit. The benefit can be tangible or intangible, but it must be within the prospect's frame of reference, nonetheless.

## State the Benefits

In the abstract, here's list of a few possible benefits, which may serve to give you some ideas in terms of getting certain pieces of the puzzle. This list is neither conclusive nor exhaustive, and does not consider whether or not these benefits (and their associated features) are unique to a given company (and frankly, a lot of them are pretty

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE  
TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR  
A SPOT?

cliché). Notice how each one is centered on the prospect, and appeals to a felt (i.e., emotional) need. They're here for purposes of example and illustration - to start your brain a-thinking:

- It costs less, saving you money
- We have more, so there's a much better chance of finding exactly what you're looking for
- Our sales staff is the most knowledgeable, so you can buy with confidence
- We have more locations, so we're convenient to get to
- Buying our product increases the value of your home
- Using our service increases your standing in the community
- Buying our product will get you a raise and a promotion at work
- Our service turns your children into money making machines who can support you in style
- Buying our product makes you the envy of the neighborhood
- Buying our product keeps you and your family more comfortable year 'round
- Buying our product makes you smart
- Buying our product makes you thin
- Buying our product makes you rich
- Buying our product makes you smart, thin, *and* rich
- Our service lets you earn money on the side
- Buying our product keeps you dry and odor free
- Buying our product makes your breath sweeter and, thus, you more attractive
- Buying our product saves you gas, making your car less expensive to operate
- Our service makes you the hit of the party
- Buying our product lets you pretend to be the world's greatest chef
- Our product keeps your food fresher longer, so you have less food spoil and go to waste
- Buying our product builds bodies 12 ways
- Our product protects you in car crashes - chances are better you'll survive a deadly crash
- Buying our product keeps your skin as soft and smooth as a baby's behind
- Using our service lowers your monthly insurance bills by fifty percent
- Buying our product makes you money without your actually having to work at it
- Our product keeps vampires away, so you don't have to deal

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

with those pesky bite marks

Obviously, some of these are ridiculous (not to mention cliché or vague and general) in order to make the point: All selling features must be identified with and joined to a selling benefit. So often, we cite a feature of the product ("It's got power steering!") or service ("We're open 24 hours, although not in a row") and either assume the prospect already knows the benefit, or we simply forget to point out the benefit. (Remember: People buy one thing and one thing only: solutions to problems. That is, they don't buy drills because they want *drills*; they buy *drills* because they want *holes*.) Advertising's job is to bring customers to your doorstep - do so by telling/selling them the benefit. Just make sure whatever claims are made can be substantiated, proven.

Now, let's take our above list and say three of the benefits are true and unique to you as an advertiser. Do not, repeat, do not use any 2 or all 3 of them in a single commercial. Each one deserves its own spot in order to develop each selling message fully. If one selling message is "it makes you thin," then do an ad about "it makes you thin." Forget about "you'll get rich" for this particular commercial. You cover you'll get rich in spot number 2. (Incidentally, identifying a selling message always identifies the buying motivation: for example, the desire to lose weight, in the case of it makes you thin.) Similarly, you'll get rich is developed in another commercial - forgetting the thin selling message (and identifying shoppers for whom acquisition of wealth is a major, perhaps sole criterion for purchasing.) You may assume the selling feature identifies the target prospect, making certain, however, that the selling message is both attractive and motivating to the target. If you don't believe any particular single selling message is strong enough by itself to warrant an entire commercial, then most likely, you shouldn't expend any time and effort on it in the first place.

**What are you selling?  
No, really. What are  
you *really* selling?**

Here are four spots for a personal injury law firm. Note how each spot sells a different and specific injury case, while doing it within the context of a consistent campaign.



Goodwin and Scieszka, 4 examples:

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

**"What If?" "You Never Know" "Shining Star" "My Sister"**

The bottom line is every single selling message or selling idea that's worth using deserves - demands! - its own commercial. Trying to cram more than one thing in any given spot short circuits the whole process, making your job that much harder. Remember, you can't put ten pounds of stuff in a five pound bag. For that, you need more than one bag. Case in point: same law firm, Goodwin and Scieszka (<http://www.1888goodwin.com>) and a campaign that totally breaks the mold: a serialized commercial - essentially a five minute long ad, done in one minute long episodes played over a week's time.



**Goodwin and Scieszka: "Joe's Story" (All five spots)**

WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF PEOPLE automatically came into your store, or bought your brand of product when they thought of your business or product category? That can and does happen. How? Those businesses who seem to have more customers than they know what to do with have done several things right. First, they have a product or service enough people need or want. Secondly, they've continued to provide that product or service in a manner their customers approve of; such approval being born of value, price, service, convenience, etc. Thirdly, they have flogged people over the head with both their name and the real reason to buy - they've made the case that theirs is the right solution. So much so, that, over time, they have created what's called "Top of the Mind Awareness" or "have "built the franchise" - what ad agencies call branding. When you think of toothpaste, chances are you think of Crest. When you think of fast food places, you think McDonald's practically automatically. What these companies have done is to position themselves in the mind of the consumer. They have done that by constantly and frequently repeating a positioning statement or Unique Selling Proposition. They boiled what they are down into a single, easy to understand, easy to remember sentence or phrase, and then sufficiently exposed and re-exposed it to sufficient numbers of people that now everybody knows, for example, Xerox<sup>®</sup> for copiers, Kleenex<sup>®</sup> for facial tissue, McDonald's<sup>®</sup> for fast food hamburgers. The clincher is that the most thoroughly branded names are now the synonyms for the generic product ("Hey, make me a Xerox<sup>®</sup> of this and take the original up to accounting." "Pass me the Kleenex<sup>®</sup>, please, I've got to blow my nose." "Honey, would you stop at the store and pick up some Q-Tips<sup>®</sup>? We're out."). There have been

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

a number of really successful positioning statements in history. Some examples (again, a list that's neither exhaustive nor definitive):

- "You deserve a break today at McDonald's"
- "Wouldn't you really rather have a Buick?"
- "Motel 6. We'll leave the light on for you"
- "Coke. The Real Thing"
- "Avis. When you're number two, you try harder"
- "Volkswagen. Think Small"
- "Ford has a better idea"
- "Have it your way at Burger King"
- "The slowest ketchup in the West. North, East and South. Heinz 57 Varieties"
- "You're in good hands with Allstate"
- "Xerox. The document company"
- "Pepsi. For a new generation"
- "The heartbeat of America is today's Chevrolet"
- "Got milk?"

The point here is that you need to somehow get your customer to associate your name with your position relative to your competitor's. You achieve your position by defining in your advertising the thing or things that make you different: better, faster, cheaper, more expensive, classier, superior to; something that sets you apart from the competition. It is this difference - your uniqueness - that becomes the reason to buy. It's the only real inducement you have.

It is vitally important to repeat your message. You need to do this for a number of reasons. One, people can forget. So, you need to remind them constantly and forever. Two, populations change. According to the Census Bureau, the population of any given region in the country can change by as much as 20% annually. That is because people move out and new people move in to replace them, or in a growing area, new people move in, adding to the population; add births and deaths to the equation, and you get the picture. The population of the area you do business in is dynamic, not static. Three, you cannot predict when someone is going to be the market for what you sell. So, you want to invest in telling that person about you at every opportunity well in advance of their needing you; that is something radio is especially good at.

If you're a retailer, treat your store as a brand. We don't like them, but if you feel you have to promote with specials, sales, contests,

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

giveaways, premiums, etc., if you have positioned your store well enough in your customers' minds, you stand a much better chance of having your promotional activities work. We'd prefer that you work to become solidly positioned, and so fully dominate the marketplace, you can dispense with sales, cut rate prices and the associated hoopla altogether. Merely having a sale, without holding any particular position in the customers' minds, especially when the "PRICES ARE THE LOWEST THEY'VE EVER BEEN/YOU WILL NEVER SEE PRICES THIS LOW AGAIN/THIS IS THE MOST INCREDIBLE SALE WE'VE EVER HAD!" ad infinitum, ad nauseam, is risky from a business point of view, because your margins are lower, and more fundamentally, when you do that often enough, you end up training your customers to wait for the sale. (If you do that, don't you think you should be closed on the days you don't have a sale? Why would you want to incur the added expense of opening on the non-sale days, when the floor traffic is going to stink, anyway?). And ironically, *that* becomes your brand.

Bear in mind what we said earlier. People simply don't care about advertising. Therefore, the challenge is to somehow make them care. How do you do that? Please understand that you're spending a great deal of money to ask someone to spend a certain amount of time with your advertisement - say, thirty or sixty seconds in the case of broadcast advertising. Now that's thirty or sixty seconds of his or her life that listener will never, ever, ever, ever get to live over again if you've wasted his or her valuable time. Therefore, you must give them a reward for paying attention to your spot. *Intrinsic* in your ad must be something your audience can take away from it that's worthwhile. What is the reward? It's a snappy melody, a laugh or a chuckle, the "warm and fuzzies," or some *genuinely* useful information. Further, if you can combine more than one of these, all the better.

Listen to this next bank spot. It's a commercial that combines most of these rewards into one.



First National Bank of Gaylord (MI), "What Kind of People?"

Here are a few more spots that, besides selling well, are just plain fun to listen to.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?



Team Recon Construction, "\$189 Windows"; Newport Farms, "Think About Something Hard"; Auto Liquidation Center, "Neighbor"; J&L Collision, "Talking Cars"

Your goal is to attract your audience, keep their attention long enough to say what you have to say, and give them something for staying with you. Remember, people think in terms of cost versus benefit in everything they do, whether they do so consciously or unconsciously. If you're taking the time to read this guide and you get something out of it, then the time it takes to read (the cost) is worth the information you can use in making your advertising decisions (the benefit). If you took the time, and you didn't get anything out of it, then the cost wasn't worth the benefit. The same logic applies to your advertising. Give your potential customers a reason to pay attention, and you'll be much more likely to make friends than vice versa. Believe it: your customers are willing to give you *one* crack at exposing your commercial to them, but only one. If you waste their time, it's going to be extremely difficult to get a second chance at them.

Listen now to several examples of spots that are intrinsically rewarding.



Jim Riehl Auto Group, Ballads 1 and 2; Lally Ford, "Ferguson 1" and "Ferguson 2"

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOUR ad is rewarding? Listen to it, look at it, read it, again, trying to see it from the other guy's perspective. If your advertisement were someone else's would you think you wasted your time? Listen to the radio, watch the TV, go through the newspaper. Listen for, look for commercials that get your attention. What are they doing that perhaps yours are not? Does the advertisement hold your attention? Does it say something worthwhile? Is there a payoff at the end? If you think so, then these are clues to what should be in your commercial. By the same token, if you think not, then you should avoid what's in those other spots. A note of caution is in order here. Advertising types have a thing they call "brand linkage." This means, simply, that the audience associates the feelings they get from your advertisement with your product. If the ad leaves the audience with positive feelings (as we would hope would be the case) then, the theory goes, those positive feelings are attached to your product, as

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE  
TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR  
A SPOT?

well. The danger in doing a really funny spot, or a great jingle (and you *do* want these things because they help engender positive feelings), is that the joke or the tune can overshadow the message, or forget to impart your message in the first place. It is, after all, your *message* that you want stamped on your customer's brain. There have been plenty of cases where award winning spots didn't work. It is therefore mightily important that the commercial be done in a way that gives your audience something worthwhile, yet at the same time makes certain they know what your message was and come a-buying as a result. Do not allow great creativity to forget what its real job is. Do not entertain to the exclusion of getting your message across. The

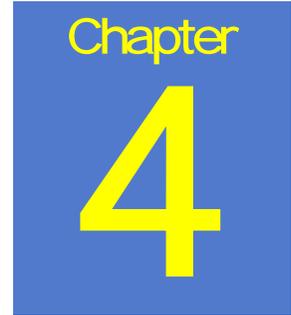
**The aim of marketing is to know  
and understand the customer so  
well the product or service fits  
him and sells itself.**

**--Peter Drucker**

message must tell the story persuasively and compellingly. (Example of a persuasive and compelling story told in an entertaining way that I wish I had been the genius behind: VW Beetle being driven through a snowstorm, finally pulls up to a county road commission snow plow. The driver gets out of the Bug and gets into the snowplow.

Voice-over at the end: "Have you ever wondered how the guy who drives the snowplow *gets* to the snowplow?" The genius behind that campaign was Bill Bernbach, the same fellow who made Avis Rent-a-Car famous with, "When you're number two, you try harder.") Find a copywriter or producer or account executive who understands this and you should be okay. To sum up: get their attention, hold it, give them the reason to buy, and make sure the commercial itself rewards them for sitting through it.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?



## The Rules

*When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.*

*--Henry Ford*

**1** Make me care. Give me something in return for spending time with your ad. After all, if you steal sixty seconds of my life from me to waste it with your stupid, irrelevant commercials, you and I probably aren't going to be friends for a while. I'm spending my money with your competitor who has the good ads.

**2** Get emotional. Connect with me on an emotional level. Make me laugh, make me cry. Make me hear the voice of my dear departed Grandma. Make me feel the thrill of hurtling to the ground at 90 miles an hour on the world's tallest roller coaster.

**3** Make the message relevant to me and to the purchase. That is, make the message or the promise come from my true motivations as a buyer. As the buyer, I want holes, not drills. I want to impress my pal or get admiring looks from women. I don't want a toaster with every car I buy.

---

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

**4** One message per ad. Perhaps more accurately, one message per campaign, please. If you've got more than one great thing to sell, then you've got to have more than one great ad -- or great campaign -- in your campaign. Don't take the "can we mention...?" approach to your ads. If it's worth mentioning, isn't it worth a spot, if not a whole campaign? And if not, why waste time on it at all?

**5** Be specific. In fact, the more specific you are, the more effective the spot becomes. The more focused and single minded the spot is, the more it seems to speak directly to me, the more I'll hear it and respond to it. Counter-intuitively, the more specific the spot, the wider its appeal. This may be the single, most important rule of all. Too many ads try to be all things to all people, or at least many things to many people. What that does is to create confusion about who or what you are - that you are the solution to my problem. This is the biggest waster of ad and marketing dollars there is. But advertisers do it because they're unwilling to spend a whole ad budget's worth on each specific message and target that they have, while ironically, they're more than willing to spend 80 percent of their budgets to talk to the other 20 percent of the people who probably can't be convinced to come in. They're afraid of losing a customer that they probably aren't going to get anyway.

**6** Avoid clichés like the plague. Not that the plague was a cliché - at least not until toward the end. With rare exception, clichés are generally tuned out. That's why they're considered clichés. They've been heard so much they no longer have much, if any, emotional impact.

**7** Avoid convoluted, jargon-filled, disjointed language. Talk in plain English. The way you and I would at a coffee shop. Simple sentences. Anybody can understand. Just make it clear.

**8** Use jingles. We love jingles. There's a reason that music is considered the universal language. It's because music engages a number of regions in the brain and buries itself there. How many times have you had a tune stuck in your head, playing over and over and over. Just make sure the jingle you use is a good one. A bad jingle will destroy a campaign just as surely as a good one will make a campaign succeed wildly. (The reason music, and sound in general for that matter, does what it does, is the

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR A SPOT?

way the brain processes visual and aural stimuli. Sparing you the gory detail, more of the brain is devoted to processing the sense of sound than of sight. When you think a thought, generally you hear and speak it in your mind, rather than see the words (try it and see). And a study recently published in the journal *Nature* shows that it's highly likely that human brains are actually hardwired for music and musical appreciation. So it stands to reason that music should be remembered so easily. It's already in a form (sound) that the human brain is designed to process most easily.)

**9** Take chances. Do something different. Don't model your ads on your competitors' ads or make them sound similar. In fact, try to see to it that you ads don't sound like ads at all. Make sure there's an element of surprise, and therefore delight. Unusual combinations of words and novel rhythms are a great way to accomplish this. (Look for the music in the words.) Following the conventional wisdom as to how commercials in your category are supposed to be made (that is that they sound like ads), merely means you end up being just another "me, too." If everybody else in your category is doing straight ads, do a singing one. If they sing a rock and roll song, do funny dialogue. Make yourself stand out. You can't be outstanding unless you first stand out. That's a new cliché we just made up.

**10** Make me want to buy. Prove to me that you really do have the solution to my problem. That is, ask for the sale. Show me how simple it is to buy, then tell me what to do, so I can get it.

**11** Advertise constantly. Own a medium somewhere, somehow. If you can, buy 10 spots a day on a station; or if money's a little tighter, buy four spots on, say, afternoon drive. Just don't appear one day and disappear the next. More than out of sight, out of mind, your advertising should be able to generate transactions for the short term, and plant seeds for transactions in the long term. After all, you're open for business most of the time, and you're planning on staying in business for the long term, so why would dispense with telling people who you are and why you're the guy to do business with ever? Every single day somebody's in the market for what you sell, why lose the chance to gain that sale?

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE  
TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR  
A SPOT?

**12** Finally, find a pro who understands how to make radio work. Doing this well is not for ignorant egomaniacs or people who go off half-cocked. Work with an advertising professional (a really great writer, a media account representative, advertising agency, creative services company, etc.) you trust to develop the kinds of campaigns you need to accomplish your goals. It is money well spent. Rule of thumb on spending: Spend your money on straight ahead advertising. Tell the same story every time. Avoid short-term promotional activities. Studies show that companies that simply advertise image or position consistently, as opposed to running promotion after promotion, grow more and are more profitable than companies dependent on the promotion. There may not be the same adrenaline rush or punch in sales, but regular advertising is the smarter way to go.

GREAT. NOW THAT YOU'VE BOUGHT THE  
TIME, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TO DO FOR  
A SPOT?

Conclusion

## The Final Word

*It takes more than capital to swing business.  
You've got to have the A. I. D. degree to get  
by - Advertising, Initiative, and Dynamics.*

*--Isaac Asimov*

**I**F THERE'S A MAGIC FORMULA for advertising success, it's being there (somewhere!) consistently, grinding it out day after day, persuading someone (anyone) to come buy from you that day and planting the seeds for transactions for tomorrow by telling your unique story in as unique and compelling way possible.

If there's a magic formula for business success, it's to create a wildly different idea, a paradigm shift or the exact opposite of "me too."

If you want more inspiration, the last audio player on the <http://www.socraticduck.com/production.html> page has a bunch more examples.

Thanks for reading and listening. We had fun making this package.

---

## Appendices

1. Our copy thought starter and evaluation form
  2. Recommended reading, Internet links and other resources
-

# SocraticDuck.com

## COMMERCIAL COPY THINKING AND PRODUCTION TOOL

---

### *Preparing to write:*

What is the Core Selling Message/USP? *(What are you trying to say? What are you trying to sell? What are people supposed to know after hearing the spot? What's the singular selling message? Is this message consistent with and does it logically and naturally support the truth about your product or service?)*

Key selling words and phrases which are powerful, compelling and persuasive *(How do you sell it in person?):*

What's the ad's headline or opening? *(How are you going to get the prospect's attention? Does it really speak to him or her?)* Remember that you have about five seconds to get her attention.

What is your call to action? *(What is the action required on the part of the listener/prospect?)*

### *After you've written:*

Did you accomplish what you set out to accomplish (be honest)? *(Does this spot get the prospect's attention? Does the copy hold to a fully developed, single selling idea? Does it over promise? Is it consistent with the driving idea behind the company? Does it surprise? Does it delight?)*

Is the language simple and direct? *(Are you talking directly to the prospect – the single prospect, as opposed to the collective ("you" vs. "listeners")? Does it paint the picture of the prospect enjoying the benefits of the product or service? Is it believable? Would you be persuaded or convinced (be honest)?)*

How many things ended up in the spot?

## SocraticDuck.com

### COMMERCIAL COPY THINKING AND PRODUCTION TOOL

---

#### *After you've written it over:*

*Now* is the language simple and direct?

*Now* whom are you talking to?

Does it paint the picture of the prospect enjoying the benefits of the product or service? *(Are only the powerful and compelling words and sounds in there? Have you removed everything that doesn't materially contribute to the spot? Is it believable? Would you be persuaded or convinced (be honest)?*

#### *Evaluating the finished commercial:*

Is the announcer/actor(s) understandable? Is it the right voice? Are you drawn in by the sound? ...the delivery and interpretation?

If they're in there, do the music and sound effects enhance and add power to the message, or do they fight one another?

Is the balance between the voice(s) and the music/sfx pleasing? Are the music and sound effects actually in stereo? Are the channels balanced? Is the level right and the audio free of distortion and unnecessary coloration?

Did you accomplish what you set out to accomplish? Did you create a commercial that one can't *help* but listen to? Is it different? Is there an element of surprise, of delight? Will many people think, "geez, what a waste of time" after they hear it? Are you sure? Did you play it for a few "civilians" to get their reaction?

## Recommended Reading, Internet Links and Other Resources

### Books

- Anderson, Chris. *Free: The Future of a Radical Price*. New York, NY. Hyperion, 2009
- Drucker, Peter. *Management, Revised Edition*. New York, NY. Collins Business, 2008
- Gerber, Michael E. *The E-Myth Revisited*. New York, NY. Harper-Collins, 1995
- Gerber, Michael E. *E-Myth Mastery*. New York, NY. Harper-Collins, 2005
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*. New York, NY. Little, Brown and Company, 2005
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. New York, NY. Little, Brown and Company, 2000, 2002
- Godin, Seth. *Purple Cow*. New York, NY. Penguin Books, 2003
- Godin, Seth. *The Big Moo*. New York, NY. Penguin Books, 2005
- Godin, Seth. *All Marketers Are Liars*. New York, NY. Penguin Books, 2005
- Kim, W. Chan and Mauborgne, Renée. *Blue Ocean Strategy*. Boston, MA. Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation, 2005
- Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking Fast and Slow*. New York, NY. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011
- Montague, Read. *Why Choose This Book?* New York, NY. Penguin Books, 2006
- Ogilvy, David. *Ogilvy on Advertising*. New York, NY. Random House, 1983
- Pink, Daniel H. *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*. New York, NY. Riverhead Books (An imprint of Penguin Books). 2009
- Pinker, Steven, *How the Mind Works*. New York, NY. W. W. Norton and Company, 2009, 1997
- Pinker, Steven. *The Stuff of Thought*. New York, NY. Viking Penguin. 2007
- Ries, Al and Trout, Jack. *The New Positioning*. New York, NY. McGraw-Hill, 1996
- Ries, Al and Trout, Jack. *The 12 Immutable Laws of Marketing*, New York, NY. Harper-Collins, 1993
- Schulberg, Bob. *Radio Advertising: The Authoritative Handbook*. Chicago, IL. NTC Business Books, 1989

Stevens, Mark. *Your Marketing Sucks*. New York, NY. Crown Business Books, 2003  
Trout, Jack. *Differentiate or Die*. New York, NY. Wiley, 2000  
Trout, Jack. *In Search of the Obvious*. New York, NY. Wiley, 2008  
Williams, Roy H. *The Wizard of Ads*. Austin, TX. Bard Press, 1998  
Williams, Roy H. *Secret Formulas of the Wizard of Ads*. Austin, TX. Bard Press, 1999  
Williams, Roy H. *Magical Worlds of the Wizard of Ads*. Austin, TX. Bard Press, 2001  
Wind, Yoram (Jerry) and Crook, Colin. *The Power of Impossible Thinking*. Upper Saddle River, NJ. Wharton School Publishing, 2005

### Websites

E-Myth Worldwide, Michael Gerber's small business consultancy and training company is at <http://www.e-myth.com>  
Marketing Profs, though Internet oriented, is a great source information. <http://www.marketingprofs.com>  
The Radio Advertising Bureau <http://www.rab.com>  
The Arbitron Ratings Company <http://www.arbitron.com>  
Psycho-Tactics <http://www.psychotactics.com>  
The Socratic Duck <http://www.socraticduck.com>.

### Blogs and newsletters

Monday Morning Memo from the Wizard of Ads. Subscribe at <http://www.mondaymorningmemo.com>  
Seth Godin's blog: <http://www.sethgodin.typepad.com>  
Radio Programming and Production Consultant Dan O'Day's site is <http://www.danoday.com>.