THE TECHNIQUES, COSTS, AND SELLING ABILITIES OF THE ANIMATED TELEVISION COMMERCIAL

BY

WILLIAM B. STUTLER

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A THESIS

Submitted to the College of Communication Arts of Michigan State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Advertising

1961

G 23435
12/13/62

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ABSTRACT

Ever since a gentleman named Walt Disney created an enchanting rat called Mickey Mouse, animation has captured the hearts and imagination of young and old alike. Mickey Mouse was the king of the movies by means of the film technique called animation which enabled him to walk and dance. Animation has always meant fun because Mickey and his friends were created for entertainment and were always funny.

With the birth of television, animation was to serve a new purpose—the television commercial. It is the theory that since animation means fun that the advertisers message would obtain more attention by using animated characters as their salesmen. It has also enabled the advertisers to demonstrate products which without the aid of animation could not be demonstrated (e.g. showing the reaction of drugs inside the body).

The object of this study is to examine the animated television commercial, its techniques, styles, time of production, costs, and selling abilities.

The important sources utilized were letters from

advertisers, advertising agencies, animation studios, research organizations and their bulletins. For background material, a number of periodicals and books were consulted.

Findings. Animation has several techniques: full animation, limited animation, photo animation, simple and compound animation, camera animation and cycle animation. There are three basic styles: realistic, modern, and abstract. Some studios specialize in one of these styles but the majority are able to use all three.

Animation can take from one to eight weeks for completion, depending on the techniques and styles utilized. The costs run from $35.00 to $20,000.00 depending upon the same reasons.

It is the consesus that a "hybrid" (animation plus live-action sequence) is the most effective commercial when compared with the all-animated and the all live-action commercials. But there have been successful all-animated and all live-action commercials.

Low recall of selling points are present when animated cartoon animals are used as salesmen. They are excellent for public relations if you have a monopoly or control of an

industry and don't have to worry about selling the product.

In final analysis, there is no true standard formula to follow in assuring the advertiser that his animated commercial will sell. Animation could sell for one type of product and then fail for another product of the same type. Each product must have its own idenity and the commercial should be tailored for it.

OUTLINE

THE TECHNIQUES, COSTS, AND SELLING ABILITIES OF THE ANIMATED COMMERCIAL

I. Definition.

   A. What is an animated commercial?
   B. Degrees of animation.
   C. Styles of animation.
   D. Reasons for using animation.

II. Procedures in the creation of an animated commercial.

III. Costs of Production.

   A. Average costs and time of production.
   B. Comparison in costs and time of production with other techniques.

IV. Do Animated Commercials Sell?

   A. Introduction.
   B. Animated case history of success.
   C. Animated case history of failure.
   D. How effective are cartoon animals as television salesmen?
   E. All-Animated VS. Live-Action VS. Combination of both techniques.
   F. Effectiveness of the animation "spectacular" television commercial.
   G. Commercial life-expectancy.
   H. Comments by Harry Wayne McMahan.

V. Conculsion and Speculation.

   A. Current trends.
   B. Where are we going from the present?

CHAPTER I

DEFINITION

A. What is an Animated Commercial?

> "We'll be back in a minute. But first,
> a message from our sponsor."

A familiar phrase, isn't it? This is the time when many people make a sandwich, get a cold beer, put the children to bed, and do assorted other necessary duties before the show is resumed. This message, from the sponsor, is advertising in the form of a commercial—a television commercial.

There are two basic kinds of advertising:

Advertising to be seen.

Advertising to be heard.

Television is both.[1] The main duty of a television commercial is to <u>sell</u>, to present the advertising message in such a manner as to persuade the potential customer (viewer) to try the product and want to keep on using it. But, a television commercial must have a viewer in order to sell. So there must be techniques to gain the viewer's attention and keep him interested enough to watch the

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1. McMahan, Harry Wayne, <u>The Television Commercial</u> (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 17.

television commercial.

There are many techniques available in television for presentation of the commercial: live action, live on film, voice over slides, and silent slides to name a few. Sometimes these techniques will gain attention and sometimes they will not. Another technique which almost always gains attention, the one with which this paper will deal, is animation.

Through the fascinating process of animation, inanimate objects are given life and stringless third-dimensional puppets have the power to move and talk. Animation brings to television the wonderful world of cartoons that move.

Animation also can be serious with technical, analytical drawings, but it is better known for its humor—and its advertising commercials.

Animation is the art of creating and photographing a series of drawings (or a series of poses of inanimate objects) which, when viewed in sequence, give an illusion of movement.

This is, of course, exactly what happens in live action movies. The pictures do not really move, but a succession of still pictures (24 per second) when projected at this speed achieve such an illusion. Animation simulates an identical procedure with a series of still drawings or poses.

Animation is done entirely on film. Various tricks are done in live television, such as moving portions of a cartoon drawing or pulling inanimate objects by hidden strings, which give the appearance of animation but technically, these are not truly classified in the same field.

In fact, there is a divergence of opinion regarding the inclusion of Stop Motion as a classification of animation. This is the technique whereby inanimate objects are given the illusion of motion. The subject is photographed one frame at a time, with slight changes in its position between each successive frame's exposure. In this way, cigarettes can be made to march, oven doors can open mysteriously, and stringless puppets can sing, talk, and move about.

Beyond this similarity in frame-by-frame photography, there is very little resemblance between the procedures of stop motion and drawing animation.

Drawing animation includes two basic categories:

Technical Animation gives a factual interpretation of the form and showing only key factors or cross-section, technical animation can simplify and explain many activities not readily demonstrable by the normal photographic treatment. Also called Animated Diagrams, these can show how a vacuum cleaner works, how the human heart pumps blood or how a corporation manages its far-flung personnel. It is concerned with information, rather than entertainment.

Cartoon Animation, on the other hand, gives a fictional interpretation generally exaggerated, of the actions of people, animals, and objects. It is primarily concerned with entertainment although it can also cloak information.[2]

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2. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 134.

B. Degrees of Animation

There are various degrees of effort—and resultant effect—in the development of drawing animation:

Full Animation indicates a maximum of smoothness and fluidity in movement, achieved by actually drawing separate progressive steps of the action into each of the 24 drawings required per second. Actually it is quite possible to animate certain slower actions quite successfully with only 12 drawings required per second. Each is then photographed twice in succession to obtain the necessary 24 pictures per second required in projection. This is called Shooting in Twos (2's). Some consider this a step short of full animation, but nearly all entertainment and commercial cartoons take advantage of this shortcut, at least at some time.[3]

Partial Animation, or Limited Animation, is applied to methods which use even more substantial short-cuts. Basically, limited animation differs from full animation in that the latter requires a separate drawing or set of drawings for

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3. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 135.

each frame of film, whereas limited animation may use the same drawing in a different position for succeeding frames of film. Where actual movement is required in limited animation, only that segment of the body or object which will move is animated on a separate cel* level, while the static portion of the body remains unchanged on the original cel.

The merits of this system are obvious. Since movement is reduced to the essentials, less time is spent calculating, drawing, and animating body movements. A walking figure in limited animation, for example appears as a simple line drawing, with its legs undergoing a repetitive motion while its body remains still. Should the subject speak, the actions of the mouth, and possibly the eyes, are animated on another cel level, while the same body remains. Another practice common in limited animation is photographing two successive frames of film to each setup in instances where character animation does occur. This reduces the number of animation drawings by half, while only slightly affecting the smoothness of action.

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*Sheet of cellulose acetate on which the artist draws for animation.

With these simplifications in animation procedure. The task of making the actual animation drawing becomes more or less mechanical, leaving the artist's mind free to invent more meaningful characterizations. The saving inherent in limited animation, therefore, is in the time saved by the animator on the original drawing, not necessarily in the number of cels inked and painted, not in photographing the cels in the final phase of production. Realism is put aside, and a new freedom of design and expression is achieved. More creative animation usually results from the use of limited techniques, since stylized drawings and backgrounds of a particular period may be used in conjunction with characters who are designed in, and even move in, a particular exaggerated manner.

Almost half of all the "spot" commercials seen on television are animated, or contain animation of some kind. The use of limited animation enables the client's message to be put across without distraction, and in a minimum of time and words. Humor and personality can be injected in these commercials in large quantities at the discretion of the

advertiser.[4]

Scratch-Off Animation, sometimes called "Grow" Cartoon, requires still less art work and cost. One basic drawing is made and it is then photographed in reverse with fractions of lines scratched off before the exposure of the subsequent frame. (In other words the last frame is photographed first, then the animation camera continues frame by frame until all lines have been removed and the picture is a blank.) On the screen this appears in opposite direction, going from a blank picture line by line until the drawing is completed. It "grows" before your eyes, a comparatively inexpensive illusion of movement.

Photo Animation, sometimes called Fotan, deals with limited animation of still photographs, titles, and trademarks.

Simple Animation is used in the sense that only one figure or subject moves in the scene. Some studios refer to this as a Unit of Animation, and they compute costs according to the number of units required.

Compound Animation indicates several subjects moving at

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4. Lowell A. Bodger, "Production Advantages In Limited Animation," American Cinematographer, June, 1961, pp. 358-359.

the same time in the same scene. Compound is more expensive than simple animation since each little movement requires a succession of drawings to complete the animation. It is the tremendous amount of art work and tedious hand labor that increases the cost of animation.

Camera Animation indicates that it is the camera rather than the art work that moves. For instance, the camera is trucking in to a close up of the subject that holds a set expression. (An animation truck is equivalent to a live action dolly.) This gives an illusion of action within the scene.[5]

Camera animation, skillfully staged, saves money, since camera work is faster and cheaper than art work. It gives free footage to the animation director since continuing art work is not required. He may also get free footage by camera animation of a pan or moving shot from one part of the scene to another, as from a street scene to the window of a house where the animation will begin.[6]

Cycle Animation enables the producer to repeat an

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5. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 136.

6. Ibid., p. 137.

animation sequence. When the commercial is in the creative and pre-production stages it can be planned to repeat certain sequences of animation in other areas of the commercial. Imagine an animated character running along a path parallel to the foreground. Once the character's movements are drawn through one complete cycle — enough to complete for continuing the running action for as long as necessary — the same set of cels can be photographed and rephotographed (perhaps in front of a different background) until that scene is complete. Another example would be a horse galloping or a wheel rolling. Only eight drawings may be required for this action, which is then photographed in repeated sequence for possibly four seconds; four by twenty-four equals ninety-six frames...from eight drawings. This method can help to keep production costs down.[7]

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7. Letter from Richard L. Stevens, Manager of the Radio-TV Production Department, Campbell-Mithun, Inc., July 20, 1961.

C. Styles of Animation

There are dozens of different art styles in animation—the range depending only on the individual talents and, oddly enough, on the policies of the various animation film companies. It is, however, possible to categorize Drawing Animation into three groupings for easy reference:

1. Realistic cartoons are, of course, far from photographic realism but come closest to it in the cartoon field. This style is also called Disney-esque since the leading exponent of this approach is the Disney organization. The style is easy-going. As exemplified in the cartoon character, Mickey Mouse, the lines of the drawings are gently curved. The backgrounds are complete, and the mood is happy exaggeration.[8]

2. Modern styles have found their way into the animation field just as they have in other graphic forms. United Productions of America (UPA) took a courageous step some time ago in this technique, contending that Disney merely represents one artist's viewpoint, and demonstrated that there was room for individual interpretation in the cartoon field. This is

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8. Baker, Stephen, Advertising Layout and Art Direction (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.), p. 75.

sometimes refered to as the UPA Technique. Among the first studios to put limited animation into use on a full-scale was UPA Pictures. The introduction of the modern style met with favorable public reaction when UPA released its first "Mister Magoo" film about a decade ago. "Mister Magoo" is now being used as a television animated character. In addition to numerous short subjects, UPA has produced several animated featurettes and one feature-length animated film, each endowed with the same flat, free-style artistic treatment. UPA is one of the leading television animation firms.[9]

3. Abstract animation is getting the advertiser's nod more and more frequently as the taste of the public grows more sophisticated. This technique deals in avant garde forms and designs which create a mood and feeling that suggest rather than actually show the subject. Even Disney went to abstract sequences in "Fantasia" (a feature film) to interpret visually how the sound of music might look. Various television commercials have experimented in this field.[10]

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9. Lowell A. Bodger, "Production Advantages In Limited Animation," American Cinematographer, June, 1961, p. 371.

10. Baker, Stephen, Advertising Layout and Art Direction (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.), p. 75.

D. Reasons for using animation

You are an agency man or a film producer. Let's suppose you have a one-minute television film commercial to prepare. The program time or viewing time and format have been established. The product message is already defined in reasonably concrete terms. The audience characteristics are determined as finely as possible. All that's left is the translation of product on to film in a way that will both sell the product and entertain or educate the viewer. Broadly speaking, aside from the "sell," entertainment and education go hand in hand as characteristics to strive for in a commercial announcement.

Your first decision is likely to be: is it animation, live action or a combination of both? Your budget might help make your decision for you. But suppose budget is open. By taking an orthodox ten per cent of the television budget for production, you have enough for animation or live-action spot. Besides, your client is looking to you for a recommendation. All he wants is an honest appraisal of the situation—your professional opinion of the best way of serving up his merchandise in film commercial form.

The immediate recognition factor in cartoons is important—witness Mutt and Jeff, the earliest forerunners of Bert and Harry Piel. They were introduced before the turn of the century and still enjoy a certain measure of popularity and recognition, and Mickey Mouse has been a going concern for more than 30 years, better today than ever.

Aside from its attributes, the sheer simplicity and flexibility of cartoons make it an attractive medium to work in. From the standpoint of advertising communication, it's easy to adapt to a selling message and easy to write a story line for. It places fewer limits on the imagination. Situations can be anytime, anywhere. The action can be simple, slow, quick, violent, peaceful, fantastic—whatever you wish. And meshed creatively with music, the animated commercial is, for the most part, livelier, filled with more zip than live action. The little swing it creates has entertainment value all in itself. Its personality and character are memorable and create an association of fun and enjoyment. A product can be injected with a pleasant kind of glamour that it does not have sitting coldly on a shelf.

What's more, a product is demonstrated quickly and easily with animation, often providing a film solution to demonstrating a product that is pratically impossible to accomplish in a minute's time.

Another distinct advantage that animated commercials offer the television advertiser is a pleasant change form a more serious live action program. The mere switch from live action to the animated commercial lends visual relief in texture—and better yet, in tone and character.

In general, these immediate advantages aren't offered in the live action commercial. The live action form is more difficult for the creative imagination to work with because the limitations are greater. Creation of time and place are dependent upon expensive sets or a camera crew going on location. Creation of a credible action situation demands good acting, skilled direction, and photography at least as competent as that used in producing television programs or motion pictures. Writing effective music to suit the live action commercial has represented such a prodigious task that big-name composers have been hired to accomplish proper

effects. For the live action commercial to try to compete with the animated form on the same basis, to achieve similar effects, ends up being a costly proposition, usually more costly than an animation solution to get the same effect.[11]

The live action commercial has other advantages, however, and should be considered more closely in terms of the product to be displayed. The difference between animation and live action is much like that between art work and photography in print advertising. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Live action, whether it is put on film or televised directly, has maximum realism in its favor. This is a great asset in making commercials where believability—and authority—are essential, as, for example, in the demonstration of products. Animated characters have one major shortcoming in comparison with live performers—they can't act. They can't look the viewer straight in the eye and make a believable pitch. But animated characters can make him believe things a live actor can't. Animation allows the artist's imagination to enter another world different from the everyday one. The artist may invade a land where animals talk and fanciful people tumble from great heights without suffering the slightest

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11. Jack Roberts, "Animation...Revisited," Telefilm, Volume II-Number III, p. 14-15.

bruise. In short, he can make up his own world.[12]

There are only so many ways you can photograph a bottle of beer, only so many ways an actor can show his satisfaction after sipping it. But an animated character, by flubbing the commercial, can make folks love him and pity him and identify with him more strongly than they do with any live actor and some of that affection inevitably attaches itself to the product as well.

What do you do with fats? Grease—and that's all shortening is when you come right down to it—what can you do to make that appealing? Well, Snowdrift answered that question with a foppish character dripping with superiority. On his first television appearance he described himself, with deadly accuracy, "an identifiable character" and commanded his viewers to think of Snowdrift whenever they saw him. "When you don't see me you may think of anything you please," he condescendingly concluded. "That's fair enough, isn't it?"

Some months later, appearing in a yachting cap, he stated that Snowdrift is "superb for kitchen or galley." Then staring imperiously at the audience, he went on, "You do have a yacht,

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12. Baker Stephen, Advertising Layout and Art Direction (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 75.

don't you?"[13]

Animation is usually used to good advantage in getting the prospect's attention, telling him something about the product, and, at the same time, entertaining him.[14]

In television commercials, the greatest advantage of animation lies in its inherent humor. It is more strenuous to leave the living room than to turn a magazine page, and for this reason dull commercials create more active resentment on the part of the "captive" audience than any other kind of advertising. Thus, entertainment plays an all-important role in television commercials. While it cannot be argued that animation will automatically assure excitement, the fact remains that the curious world of animated characters quickly spells "fun" to a great many people.[15]

A check of agencies and animators brings these specific reasons for a product's switch to animation:

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13. "The Case For Animated TV Spots," Broadcasting, August 15, 1960, p. 38.

14. Dunn, S. Watson, Advertising Copy And Communication (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956), p. 465.

15. Baker, Stephen, Advertising Layout And Art Direction (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 75.

(1) Need for a change of pace. Techniques—well as commercials themselves—can grow stale; a new approach is demanded.

(2) Need to create an image in a field where identification is marred because of a sameness among the competitive product.

(3) As a means of simplifying a complicated sales message.

(4) To caricature what might otherwise be a distasteful message.

(5) To catch the eye (and imagination) of children.[16]

Some of the time, the very nature of the concept dictates animation. That is, the concept or demonstration within the commercial is not possible to do "live".[17]

There are many and varied reasons why animation is employed in the television commercial. The following are comments of advertising agency men and animation producers. These are opinions and are presented as interesting comments from the men in the business. They are as follows:

Any product can benefit from the use of animation. The advisability of animation is determined by the

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16. "Some Facts You Should Know About Animation," Sponsor, August 23, 1960, p. 40.

17. Letter from Robert Margulies, Commercial Broadcast Production, Ted Bates and Company, Inc., July 12, 1961.

specifics of the situation. Obviously, the best way to demonstrate the preparation of food would call for live action, but the best way fo driving home the label might consist of making use of animation could be suitable for an entire presentation of a food product as long as demonstration of the food product were not involved.

Ralph G. Tuchman, President and General Manager, HARRIS-TUCHMAN PRODUCTIONS, INC. [18]

Naturally, we feel that most products would benefit from the animation selling technique. To be more objective, however, I would imagine that animation would be of most benefit to three of selling:

(1) Service or other intangible messages where actual product demonstration is impossible.
(2) Products aimed at children (i. e. breakfast cereals, toys, etc.)
(3) Products like cigarettes or beer where competition is extreme and almost everything that can be done has been done at least a hundred times.

Robert A. Wolcott, THE ANIMATORS [19]

We tend to think that almost any product can be sold with animation. I think to single out any one product, or types of product, I would have to say anything that appeals to children. Breakfast food for example. The Kelloggs Co., again in example, probably spend a million dollars a year for animation of one sort or another. Beer has also been a product that has used animation to it's fullest. No one can

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18. Letter from Ralph G. Tuchman, July 20, 1961.

19. Letter from Robert A. Wolcott, July 20, 1961.

deny the success that the Piel Brothers have had in New York with their animated commercials. I think that any product that you can "kid" with is a good prospect for animation. Animated cartoons have always been thought of by the public as something that is fun to watch. They are light, gay, and will never take themselves to seriously. About the only product (that spends a great deal on TV) that does not use animation is the cosmetic business. Cosmetic manufactures and the people that use them, look upon it as a very serious and glamorous business, not lending itself to what animation can do.

Peter Vieira, RAY PATIN PRODUCTIONS [20]

You'll find most any product or service will lend itself to most any film technique to a greater or lesser degree. What our clients and creative minds might consider applicable to the animation techniques, some other client and its agency would not. We employ animation to sell electricity, food, trading stamps, beer, among others. But we also use the live-action technique -- and sometimes a combination of the two.

Where food is to be shown and demonstrated we have found it best to use live-action photography. We achieve apatite appeal, a very necessary ingredient in advertising food products. It is also possible to better demonstrate the actual use of the product.

This, in my opinion, would hold true for any product for which the advertiser is trying to transmit the real visual image, such as automobiles, food, air conditioners, etc.

Animation has an entertainment value which can attract the viewer or consumer and encourage him to feel good about the product or service. This, of course, is not the only reason for utilizing the technique. Perhaps animation might help to emphasize

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20. Letter from Peter Vieira, Ray Patin Productions, July 21, 1961.

the visual message of the commercial. Maybe the commercial is to be broadcast on children's programs. The plan might be to duplicate a character or symbol already identified as belonging to the product or service. Perhaps the advertiser desires the development of a character or symbol which by its design should be animated in TV commercial form.

Animation itself is not a reason for producing a commercial, nor is it to be restricted to only certain products or services. It is an aid, a tool, which when used properly and to best advantage can make a commercial more effective in reaching the consumer.

Richard L. Stevens, Manager,
Radio-TV Production Dept.,
CAMPBELL-MITHUN, INC.[21]

Any product that, due to its natural characteristics, cannot be presented in live photography in good taste, i.e., demonstration of Dristan Nasal Mist's effectiveness for sinus conjection. There many other examples where animation is engaged to reveal sensitive or otherwise unsavory explanations in areas where live photography could not be used.

Tom De Huff, Director,
Commercial Production,
CUNNINGHAN AND WALSH, INC.[22]

I'm willing to say that any product could be promoted successfully through animation, providing the technique used is individual, arresting, clever or entertaining. However, entertainment doesn't always sell the main copy points. As you know everything from "U.S. Steel" down to "M & M Candies" has been successfully sold through animation. Other animated commercials which quietly disappear from the air apparently didn't quite make the grade.

Lou Manousek, TV Producer,
BENTON AND BOWLES, INC.[23]

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21. Letter from Richard L. Stevens, July 20, 1961.
22. Letter from Tom De Huff, July 24, 1961.
23. Letter from Lou Manousek, July 26, 1961.

As you can see from the letters, there are various reasons for using animation. The consensus is that the product itself can determine whether or not animation should be used. If a product has a particular "visual-image" as a main selling point, such as food, then perhaps another television technique would be more advantageous. Of course, if the creative facilities can come up with copy points, then animation could and probably should be utilized.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURES IN THE CREATION OF AN ANIMATED COMMERCIAL

Assuming that conditions are ideal and that work can be started on the day the advertising agency receives the order from the client, and the animation production is started on the day the order is received from the agency, there is a typical schedule which might be followed:

First Week - First Day. Agency conference: television director, television copy writer, producer, account executive, service manager, art director, space writer, to set basic theme. The television writer should have all the current ads, space plus radio. Product logos and all display material should be seen, because the television commercial, while a potent selling entity in itself, is only part of the campaign. It can help strengthen the impact of the other media, help popularize slogans, bring life to important illustrations, create mental pictures which will make the point-of-sales pieces really sell. The writer should also have an idea of the budget within which he must work.

Writing television takes time, because even a twenty-second film can tell a complete story, if it is good. It will take three days to a week for writing and revision.

Before the second meeting it will be decided what type of television commercial technique will be utilized. In this example, animation will be the technique. Many people in the agency could decide which technique would be best. The decision is usually arrived by evaluating the type of product, the audience desired, the mood, the type sell, all of which are aspects. In some agencies, the creative director, the television production department, or the art director may make the decision. But it is usually the decision of the television copy department and the particular person assigned to the account by the Television Copy Chief.[24]

Second Week. Television writer confers with art director on the account...has him make up rough drawings to be used with copy as basic storyboards.* Allow three days to a

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* Television Storyboards may be prepared in a variety of ways. Charcoal is the art director's favorite implement, but chisel point, water color, paper cutouts, ink are all good.

Visual story sequence is shown by means of individual (Con't.)

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24. "A Basic Guide To Television Commercials," Advertising Requirements, August, 1958, p. 39.

week to fit into his schedule. In many cases, the writer and the art director work together as a team from the start.

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frames, about three-fourths as high as they are wide. There are pads available with frames preprinted on them. Script appears next to each picture, roughly corresponding with the action shown. Often, a third panel is added to storyboards, giving the writer full opportunity to explain the scene and indicated movements.

About eight to ten frames are sketched out for a twenty-second commercial, twelve to fifteen for a full minute. This of course, will vary, depending on the complexity of the scenes.

Many agencies make a practice of presenting sound (music, narration, dialogue, sound effects, etc.) along with storyboards to give the client a firmer concept of the end commercial. Sound may be recorded in various ways, tape being the most popular form.

As a rule, it is more difficult for the average onlooker (such as the client may be) to visualize the final form of a commercial from storyboards than to anticipate a space ad from a layout sketch. For this reason, sometimes it is advisable to show all storyboard sketches in a complete series so that he can get an immediate idea of the entire commercial from beginning to end.

The important thing to remember is that storyboards are only preliminary sketches. In the case of animated commercials, storyboards are prepared with the greatest accuracy but the agency art director does not hinder the animation studios from making creative contributions on their own.

From Baker, Stephen, Advertising Layout and Art Direction, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), p. 29.

Copies of the scenario and storyboards are sent out to various animation production studios for bids. It is useful to choose three to four studios which seem best able to handle that particular style of animation. The bids are sorted out by considering first the integrity of the company, second, the creative talent of the staff and the consistency of the company's work in the medium, and third, the producer's advertising know-how and economic stability. Past performance in the medium is also a fairly reliable yardstick. Most producers will be glad to furnish sample reels of their latest work, on request. Perhaps only one studio can deliver the finished animated film within the particular time schedule.

Once figures and storyboards are assembled, these are submitted to the client. If he asks for changes, revised costs are made. Seemingly small changes may mean a difference of many hundreds of dollars in film costs! Often the storyboards get client-approval before estimates.

Third and Fourth Week. Client has approved the budget and storyboards, so the animation studio is engaged, and the agency makes up new and more detailed storyboards if needed.[25]

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25. Ibid., p. 39.

The simplest procedure requires at least twenty-nine men. That includes the animation director, layout man, four animators and three assistants, five inkers, ten colorers, two cameramen, an editor, and two sound men.

To most agency people, the animation director (the title given to the man who supervises the entire production) is the one who counts. He's the man who is primarily responsible for putting the character into a character (i.e., a twinkle in the eye, a gruff appearance).

Storyboard supplied, there is a meeting of minds, agency and studio. At such a session, character design differences would be ironed out, backgrounds decided upon and other preliminary problems worked out.[26]

Sometimes the agency furnishes Model Sheets, sketches which show a principal cartoon character in a variety of poses. This sheet or sheets show relative dimensions of the head and figure from different angles and often typical facial expressions. This is to be used as a model for all animators and others to follow. Thus, different artists

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26. "Some Facts You Should Know About Animation," Sponsor, August 23, 1958, p. 40.

working on different scenes of a production will develop an identical figure.[27]

When the studio has a firm idea of what the agency is after, it can usually come up with a "winner" the first try.

To avoid difficulties, it is wise if the agency has a representative of the client available during the animation, as well as somebody from the agency. Someone who is very familiar with the account and the product should be on hand, to avoid simple mistakes in the handling or usage of the product. Changes must be okayed as needed, or revised animation may be necessary, and that is just as expensive as the original. Many agencies send a television art director, too, to insure getting the maximum "sell' out of every scene.[28]

At the animation studio, the Animation Director determines how scenes and sequences will be developed and how they will be fitted to the action requirements of the sound track. Working with animated characters, he is in every

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27. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Masting House Publishers, 1957), p. 140.
28. "A Basic Guide To Television Commercials," Advertising Requirements, August, 1958, p. 39.

sense as vital, as influential to their performance as the live action director is to his human actors.

In animation, the sound track is almost always recorded first and then transferred to film, so that it can be analyzed and measured frame-by-frame. The studio's musical arranger may compose the music and help write the lyrics. In some cases, the agency will furnish an already established jingle, or sometimes an entire sound track. Most of the animated television commercials today use music as an important part of the sound track. The musicians, singers, and announcers are engaged by the studio. The audio portion of the commercial is recorded in its entirety and will be used as a guide for the action to be animated. With an agency representative at the recording session, the studio can get "on-the-spot" approval.[29]

The film's editor will "Read the Track," marking on the film where each word, syllable, and letter (or position of the beat of music, or sound effect) appears for each of the twenty-four frames per second. Cartoon Sound is an expression used to refer to the exaggerative treatment generally

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29. Renee Patin, "I wonder...What Makes 'Em Move?," Telefilm, Volume II, Number III, p. 13.

given to sound recordings for this technique. Cartoon voices are usually amusing in quality and the sound effects (as of a train, for instance), and music are done with a planned whimsicality. Cartoons are fun, and the humor must begin with the sound recording.[30]

The analysis is then copied on Exposure Sheets which, line by line, reveals what the sound track contains so that the animation can be designed to match it exactly. They describe and time every bit of the action and dialogue that will take place. They also indicate the musical tempo. The exposure sheet is highly complex to those unacquainted with animation but is well understood by those for whom it serves as the blue print for the whole animation process. In general appearance it resembles a ledger sheet. The horizontal lines indicate individual frames (an individual picture on a strip of film). The tempo is also indicated on these lines, this can be eighth's, tenth's, twelveth's, sixteenth's, twenty-fourth's, etc., each indicating the musical beat. The sheets are also divided into columns. One column is devoted to the directors' instructions to the animator, another indicates a

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30. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 141.

breakdown of the sound track in terms of single frames of film the length of each word of dialogue, the intervals between words, the vowel and consonant sounds, and various other accents. If the character says "hello" for example, and it has been indicated that the recorded word occupies eight frames, the artist must animate the eight drawings in sequence, moving the mouth and lips of the character in order to produce the word in synchronization with the sound indicated. All other sound effects are indicated in the same manner.[31] It may take two seconds or forty-eight frames to say "It's a F-O-R-D!" and the animation director must know exactly which frames his animated character will shape his mouth for "F," then go to "O," then "R," then "D".[32] The animator will expose his action on the lines and columns in that portion of the sheets, "timed" to the desired action. Each of the action columns are numbered one, two, three, four, etc., and represents a layer of action. If a man walks into a scene from one side, a dog from the other and rain is falling, the animator does not draw man, dog, and the rain all on one sheet of paper. He

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31. Renee Patin, "I wonder...What Makes 'Em Move?," Telefilm, Volume II, Number III, p. 31.

32. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 137.

makes a separate series for each action. Each drawing in a series is numbered, and those numbers are listed in their proper columns. Each horizontal line clear across may have as many as five different drawings exposed to it, each with a different number. This exposure sheet will be followed by the cameraman when he assembles the drawings and photographs them into a composite picture. The cameraman moves his camera according to the instructions given him in still another column of the exposure sheet. The exposure sheet is the master guide for the entire operation.[33]

Lead Sheet and Cue Sheet are both terms for the special analytical guide used in cueing music before animation. It computes mathematically the relations of the musical notes, sound effects, and dialogue for the exposure sheet.[34]

The whole ideal of animation is based on the same principle as the "flip-book" which is so popular with the children. When the pages of the book are flipped with the thumb the drawings give the illusion of movement. If one examines the individual

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33. Renee Patin, "I wonder...What Makes 'Em Move?," Telefilm, Volume II, Number III, p. 31.

34. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 146.

pages of the book in order he observes that on each page the action is pictured in a position of movement which has progressed just a shade from the position on the preceding page. Filmed animation employs much the same technique. The pages of the flip-book would correspond to frames which, when run through the projector, give the illusion of continuous action.

Meanwhile, the artists have been busy. The Story-Sketch Man has interpreted the script in Thumbnail Sketches (Thumbnail Sketches or Thumbnails are miniature quick sketches which the Story-Sketch Man uses in working out details of animation scenes),[35] perhaps twenty to thirty for each minute of proposed action. Next the Layout Artist, or Layout Designer, actually sketches the backgrounds and designs the production. He also must have vast experience, with a virtual slide-rule in his head to figure how his two-dimensional art work can achieve three-dimensional action.

"Field" is the animation term for the size of area to be drawn or photographed. There are several methods of computing this, each based on the type of animation stand to be used.

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35. Ibid., p. 146.

For instance, a twelve-field may indicate a full area of twelve inches in width so that a ten-field then would be the approximate size for titles to allow for the television-cut off, and a four-field would be a good close up size. Everything on the camera and animation stand must be computed in mechanical fractions, which is why the layout man must have a slide rule in the back of his mind.[36] He helps plan the camera angles, the speed of moving backgrounds, camera "trucks," and the "continuity" or changes from one scene to the next. This continuity must be smooth, or it will result in a series of confusing flashes to the viewer. The layout man has worked with the producer and director in designing the characters; his background sketches will be used to guide the background artist and animators, and will serve to coordinate the two functions.[37] Cartoon backgrounds are somewhat equivalent to the sets of live action.

Animators and Assistant Animators work under the animation director on the individual scenes, animating key drawings to describe the high points and extremes of action. For instance,

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36. Ibid., p. 140.

37. Renee Patin, "I wonder...What Makes 'Em Move?", Telefilm, Volumn II, Number III, p. 31.

if twenty-four drawings are required per second (for full animation), they may draw only frames one, six, ten, eighteen, and twenty-four. These sheets then are turned over to the In-Betweener, who makes the needed drawings in between: two, three, four, six, five, seven, nine, eleven, twelve, etc.[38]

The drawing tables at which they work include an animation board, in the center of which is a large, circular metal disc which can revolve, permitting the artist to draw at any angle. In the center of the disc is a glass covered opening measuring about 10 X 12 inches. An ordinary sixty-watt bulb is placed under this opening, allowing the artist to see through several layers of drawings and to help him in following the action of his drawing. This also helps him in following the action of his characters.

The animator and his assistants draw the action in a series of pencil sketches, sometimes called Film Drawings.[39] Each is approximately eleven inches by fourteen inches in size although some technical animation uses a larger size. Each sheet is punched uniformly with three metal registration

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38. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 139.

39. Patin, op. cit., p. 32.

peg-holes so that all may be kept in exact registration. They exactly fit the registration pegs imbedded in the animation disc. Layout men, background men, animators, assistants, in-betweeners, inkers, and cameramen must all have identical sets of these registration pegs.

While all the action drawings are being made, the background artist is preparing the "sets" against which all action will take place. Using the rough sketches made by the layout men, the background artist paints in graduating shades of gray. He chooses color values that will work best in achieving proper contrasts in television transimission and considers the relationship of the tones used for the characters to those in the background.

There are two types of backgrounds, still and moving. When it moves, it is called a panorama or "pan" and usually is moved a fraction of an inch between each exposure. The pan furnishes the means for running action. In this the background is moved a fraction of an inch between each exposure. The pan furnishes the means for running action. In this the background is moved in one direction and the character drawings animate in one spot, creating the illusion of their moving

across the "pan". The still background remains stationary throughout and is therefore smaller. It is used when the camera is not to achieve a "panning" action.[40]

At this point a Pose Reel may be run. The Pose Reel refers to a test film made with the finished sound track to show the cartoon figures in key poses or peaks of action before the intervening action is started. For television commercials, the Pose Reel often is preferred as a check point instead of the more finalized pencil test.[41]

Pencil Tests may be run when the in-betweeners finish their work. This means the early drawings are photographed in sequence on film and then screened to evaluate the action before proceeding further with the art work. Television commercial animation, in the haste to meet deadlines, often must do without pencil tests, so there is no opportunity for the animation director to evaluate and improve the work.

"Clean up" refers to the work of erasing and defining rough lines in the early drawings. Generally, this is not

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40. Ibid., p. 33.

41. McMahan, Harry Wayne, Television Production (New York: Hasting House Publishers, 1957), p. 141.

done until after pencil tests. Clean up work is the responsibility of the assistant animator.

The drawings are now ready to go to the Inking and Painting Department, where inkers take over and trace or copy the drawings from the paper to Cels or Cells, or Celluloids (also approximately eleven inches by fourteen inches in size) .005 inches thick. As many as three or four of these transparent sheets of cellulose acetate or other plastic may be used, one on top of another, to put all the component subjects into the final picture for a single frame.[42]

Inkers trace the outlines in India Ink on the top of the cel. Then the Painters, sometimes called Opaquers, paint the opaque portion such as faces, bodies, clothes. Black is painted on top (to prevent a mirror-like reflection), but all else in painting goes on the underside of the cel. Colors or the equivalent shades of gray may be used, but great care must be taken to see that identical shades follow through on the hundreds of cels. Each paint shade has its own number, and the painter refers to the chart prepared by the director and layout man to determine what number of paint to apply to what sections.

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42. Ibid., p. 139.

Otherwise the colors will "jump" in tone.

Checking must now be done to be certain all the cells and backgrounds called for on the exposure sheet are now properly completed and in order, ready for camera. This is the work of the Checker. In smaller operation the assistant animator may assume this responsibility.

The camera used in animation is completely different from other types of camera equipment. It is designed to shoot only one frame at a time, and it must be mounted on a special Animation Stand or Camera Stand which permits the camera to make calibrated movements in all directions (called on the exposure sheet: "North, South, East, West,"), as well as trucking or moving in and out. Generally, the camera shoots straight down on the cels, each registered to peg-holes as they have been each step of the way. The reason for inking and painting on transparent cels is to enable the latter to be placed one over the other and combined with the background they appear as one complete drawing. The combination of cels plus background is visible everywhere except where the painted figures block it out. It is not unusual to have twelve backgrounds and almost two thousand cels (some working two or

three deep in certain scenes) to achieve a one-minute animated film.[43]

Following the exposure sheet, the cameraman exposes the commercial, frame by frame, with the stop motion camera. A plate of glass (the platen), operated by pneumatic or electric force, presses the drawings flat and removes wrinkles. The operator touches the control button of the camera, and one frame of the completed film is photographed. The platen is then lifted; the cels are removed, replaced with the next set showing the progressive movement, and photographed. The photographic operation is repeated with each drawing that is to be a part of the completed spot. For a sixty second commercial, the cameraman must go through these motions, 1,440 times (there are twenty-four frames per second of animation).

After laboratory processing, the film is edited to the proper length to sychronize with the sound track.[44]

For production of a sixty second commercial, allow eight to ten weeks. For shorter lengths, from six to eight

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43. Ibid., 140.

44. Patin, op. cit., p. 33.

weeks is standard, depending on complexity. For a series, count on a minimum of eight weeks for the first commercial, followed by a commercial every succeeding week.

The animation studio delivers a finished print for the client's approval, before ordering in quanity. Additional prints take approximately a week.

The above time table is based on tight schedules and the premise that everything has gone smoothly, without revised animation.

It can be done faster. You can turn out complete commercials in less time, but it means rushing certain portions of the process, or paying for overtime, which can add half again and more to the cost of the commercial. And hurrying means increased danger of errors or poor quality, giving half-baked film or perhaps a month's delay in revised animation. Too much rush in television animation can be disastrous![45]

The animated commercial is now ready, after approximately ten weeks, for commercial use.

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45. "A Basic Guide To Television Commercials," Advertising Requirements, August 1958, p. 40.

CHAPTER III

COSTS OF PRODUCTION

A one-minute television commercial will run ninety feet. In figuring costs, prices are determined by technique, style, complexity of animation, amount of detailed drawings, the number of figures used, whether full or limited animation, and the sound track.

Quality animation and quality live-action of comparable lengths are about equal in cost. The use of animation depends primarily on the product and the sales points to be made. It is not price that limits the use of animation as much as it is the determination of which of the two techniques achieve the most desirable end result for the product being advertised.

Most advertiser-producer contracts include story, production cost, talent session fee, and one answer print. Additional prints are usually covered by separate orders.

The standard terms of payment for animated commercials varies with the standard payment terms of different agencies. Some producers request one-third on signing the contract, one-third on delivery of the prints. Others prefer fifty per cent on signing and one-fourth of the contract price after

completing each of the last two stages.[46]

When an agency does not supply the animation studio with a specific storyboard, the process entails about five additional men, all storyboard creators. What happens is this: the idea is presented to about five men, all of whom have different styles and techniques (from the most bizarre to the corniest). Each develops it in his own manner. Through hit-and-miss, a characterization suitable to the client is usually obtained.

But animation studios generally prefer to work with an agency that has more than just a sketchy idea of what it wants and doesn't ask the studio to speculate. A case in point: Terrytoons (animation firm) speculated for one advertising agency, at the clien request for what it termed a "cartoon commercial." After viewing several storyboards the agency approved, but the client changed its mind. Cost to Terrytoons: $1,000.[47]

The exact budget savings resulting from the use of limited animation depends, of course, on the degree of limitation.

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46. "A Basic Guide To Television Commercials," Advertising Requirements, August, 1958, p. 40.

47. "Some Facts You Should Know About Animation," Sponsor August 23, 1958, p. 41.

The term "limited" refers to a wide range of techniques, ranging from just one step short of full animation to one step above no movement at all. Animation of a large number of subjects, where necessary, or use of single-cel complex animation, where applicable, will tend to raise or lower price respectively.[48]

There is a wide range of costs for animation. To give an idea, of the range, the following are letters from agencies and animation firms concerning animation costs:

> On the average, we usually have paid between $90 and $110 per foot for animation. Animation can, and has been bought at $52 per foot, while to be considered is Walt Disney's "Pinochio", which had sequences costing $400 per frame. So as you can see, each storyboard presents a completely different production estimate than another.
>
> Harry Hess, DANCER-FITZGERALD-SAMPLE INC.[49]

> The cost of animated commercials are between $70 and $115 a thirty-five millimeter foot, generally speaking. Also, generally speaking, animation costs more than other film techniques. Here again, however, it depends on the specific. Some animation is terribly expensive. This also holds true for other

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48. Lowell A. Bodger, "Production Advantages In Limited Animation," American Cinematographer, June, 1961, p. 371.

49. Letter from Harry Hess, DANCER-FITZGERALD-SAMPLE INC., New York, New York, July 26, 1961.

techniques.

Robert Margulies, Vice President,
Commercial Broadcast Production,
TED BATES AND COMPANY, INC.[50]

Speaking relatively, I would say initial costs are least for taped commercials (live) - then live commercials - and the most expensive, animated commercials. There is also an important factor of time. Animated commercials take about four times as long to complete than filmed or taped commercials using actors or objects. The cost of animated commercials depends on two considerations. (1) The number of characters used and (2) the technique employed (this is limited versus full animation). The price range is from $75 to $125 per foot of animated film commercials are ninety feet long. To this price must be added the cost of music, voices, sound effects, storyboards (agency) and the service of the agency producer in getting the final answer print in time for the air date. An average simple commercial costs approximately $8,500 and takes six to eight weeks to complete.

Lou Hanousek, Television
Producer, BENTON AND BOWLES,
INC.[51]

Costs of full animation are from twenty-five per cent to forty per cent higher than a normal live-action spot. Animation, at present costs approximately $125 per foot, or $11,250 for a one-minute spot. Limited animation comes in for about one-

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50. Letter from Robert Margulies, Vice President, Commercial Broadcast Production, TED BATES AND COMPANY INC., New York, New York, July 12, 1961.

51. Letter from Lou Hanousek, Television Producer, BENTON AND BOWLES, INC., New York, New York, July 26, 1961.

half the price.

Bob Wickersham, Animation
Director, LEO BURNETT CO., INC.[52]

The average cost per foot for a black and white one-minute live photography film ranges between $3,500 to $20,000. The norm is $8,000. The cost of animated commercials runs approximately $90 per foot, resulting in an average cost of $8,000 to $9,000 per minute commercial.

Tom De Huff, Director,
Commercial Production,
CUNNINGHAM AND WALSH, INC.[53]

The cost of animated television commercials cannot be compared with live-action costs.

Given one animated television commercial storyboard I can receive competitive bids ranging from "here" to "there".

Further, I can receive a wide range of bids for any live-action commercial we might create.

Therefore, any comparison of costs would not be valid.

We have paid as much as $15,000 for one sixty-second animated television film commercial. We have paid over $20,000 for one sixty-second live-action commercial. We have also produced animation commercials for as little as $1,000 and live-action spots for $700.

Richard L. Stevens, Manager,
Radio and Television,
CAMPBELL-MITHUN, INC.[54]

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52. Letter from Bob Wickersham, Animation Director, LEO BURNETT COMPANY, INC., Chicago, Illinois, July 17, 1961.

53. Letter from Tom De Huff, Director, Commercial Production, CUNNINGHAM AND WALSH, INC., New York, New York, July 24, 1961.

54. Letter from Richard L. Stevens, Manager Radio and Television, CAMPBELL-MITHUN, INC., Minneapolis, Minnesota, July 20, 1961.

An animated commercial (sixty-second) may cost, anywhere between $7,200 to $16,000, depending how simple or elaborate the storyboard may be.

Hal Elias, Studio Manager
UPA PICTURES, INC.[55]

In speaking of animation costs, there are so many variables, depending upon the style of animation, number of characters, etc. Roughly speaking, a sixty-second animated commercial would run from $7,000 to $10,000, not including the sound track.

Rex Cox, SARRA, INC.[56]

There are no average costs or times of production. Each commercial is tailored to its own budget: a ten-second ID may take four weeks and cost $1,000. A major ninety second special commercial may take sixteen weeks and cost $25,000 with sound track. I know some commercials that have been sold for $250 and some that were produced from idea to air in one week.

Les Goldman, QUARTET FILMS INC.[57]

Cost of animation is generally quoted by one foot based upon thirty-five millimeter (ninety feet per mimute). Depending upon the degree of animation and depending upon the company doing the animation. American production will range from $30 to $150 per foot. Foreign production in such places as Japan, Mexico and Europe will

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55. Letter from Hal Elias, Studio Manager UPA PICTURES, INC., Burbank, California, August 1, 1961.

56. Letter from Rex Cox, SARRA, INC., New York, New York, July 20, 1961.

57. Letter from Les Goldman, QUARTET FILMS, INC., Hollywood California, July 18, 1961.

range from $20 to $70 per foot.

Ralph G. Tuchman, President
and General Manager, HARRIS-
TUCHMAN PRODUCTIONS, INC.[58]

Each of these agencies and animation firms quote different prices. There are too many variables to pick a standard cost. Each commercial is budgeted according to its own needs.

If we pick a cost of $8,000 to $9,000, which is somewhere in between all the prices quoted, for an average, then the prices are predicted to go up to around $11,000 within the next two years. One reason is a shortage of animators. The entire cartoon output—theatrical films, television programs and commercials, industrial films—is the work of slightly more than a thousand people, many of them veterans who started with Disney twenty years ago or more. Unless some way is found to restore the glamour to cartooning that it had then to attract more artists to this field, advertisers wishing to use animated television commercials or sponsor original cartoon programs may find themselves standing in line waiting to be served and paying the kind of prices that

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58. Letter from Ralph G. Tuchman, President and General Manager, HARRIS-TUCHMAN PRODUCTIONS, INC., Hollywood, California, July 20, 1961.

occur when demand exceeds supply.[59]

Film Producers offer suggestions toward keeping costs down. A few of them are:

(1) Don't try to rush. Giving the studio full time to complete the commercials also gives the agency a better chance for revision at each step, rather than expensively at the last minute.

(2) Keep the characters few and simple.

(3) Don't over-complicate the sales message, remember what is to be said and say it simply.[60]

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59. "The Case For Animated TV Spots," Broadcasting, August 15, 1960, pp. 38, 39.

60. "Some Facts You Should Know About Animation," Sponsor, August 23, 1958, p. 40.

CHAPTER IV

DO ANIMATED COMMERCIALS SELL?

A. Introduction

"Cartoons make the best commercials."

So say Los Angles viewers, who chose the animated ads by a better than two-to-one margin over musical commercials, the second-rated variety of television spots.

Those commercial preferences were revealed by a survey prepared and conducted by Dr. Aly Baylor, chairman of the department of economics and marketing at Woodbury College, Los Angles. Woodbury students made 3,018 interviews to collect the information. Complete data on television commercials showed cartoons preferred by 48.4 per cent of respondents, musical spots by 21.1 per cent, silent commercials by 12.1 per cent, demonstration by 8.3 per cent, serious by 6.6 per cent, and dramatic by 3.5 per cent.[61]

In this chapter several case histories as to success and failure of animated commercials will be presented along with research from the Schwerin Research Corporation and comments by Harry Wayne McMahan, television commercial authority.

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61. "What People Think Of Commercials," Broadcasting, June 27, 1960, p. 36.

It has not been possible to present the interview and research techniques used in the studies. This has not been available for so called confidential reasons. And it has been like "pulling teeth" to gain what information that is presented.

The Schwerin Research Corporation uses a method called "competitive preference", in which two or several commercials of the same product (one animated, one live-action, and possibly one combining both techniques) are shown to a selected audience. From the preference received from the audience Schwerin concludes which are the most effective. This method, however, only shows which commercial the audience enjoyed watching; it does not say whether the audience would buy the product. The only true means of evaluating the selling abilities of a commercial is from the sales over a certain time period that the commercial has run. This information unfortunately, also, is not always released.

The Schwerin Research is presented because it is highly respected in the field and because it is the only research made available out of the eighty agencies, animation firms, corporations, and research organization that received requests for information.

B. Animated Case Histories Of Success

Chevron Gasoline's "Hy Finn"

In 1958 Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn, in conjunction with California Oil's Ad Manager Max Barry, created a cartoon character named "Hy Finn." Hy Finn's first assignment was a tough one: to take a trade name, Chevron, which was well known on the West Coast, and introduce it to the east.[62]

At that time, the California Oil Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Standard Oil of California, was marketing Calso gasoline in Calso stations from Maine to Virginia. On the West Coast, and in the Rocky Mountain states, Standard Oil of California, the parent company, had been selling Chevron gasoline for fifteen years through Chevron dealers as well as through Standard Stations Inc.

It was a two-stage job. First, to change the brand name of the gasoline, and tell people that they could buy Chevron at Calso stations. Then to change the name of the stations themselves from Calso to Chevron.[63]

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62. "How Hy Finn Makes Irreverence," National Petroleum News, January, 1960, p. 84.

63. "Hy Finn: Chevron Star In The East," Printer's Ink, August 18, 1961, p. 29.

For the big change over, California Oil boosted its advertising budget to $2.1-million. The largest portion, about $800,000 went into television.

Hy Finn was seen in cartoons on television and newspapers, and heard on radio. He was the key agent in handling the tricky brand name switch, bringing in a fresh new name and trying to retain the old one's twelve year loyalties in a sharply competitive market.[64]

Why a cartoon character? It was felt that most gasoline advertisers were talking to each other. Gasoline advertising was full of big pumps, smiling dealers, super-technical claims. Nobody—least of all the consumer—believed very much of it. So a different approach to gasoline advertising was invented, a cartoon character, Hy Finn...a husband...a dog owner...an American motorist...and a customer.[65]

And as a customer, he can be bored by some advertising and

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64. "How Hy Finn Makes Irreverence," National Petroleum News, January, 1960, p. 84.

65. Max Barry, Best Ad Campaign Presentation - 1959, A Report to the Annual Association of National Advertisers Meeting, Hot Springs, Virginia, November 8 to 11, 1959, Prepared by the information service for A.N.A. Members (New York: A.N.A. Inc., 1959 p. 2.

attracted by some advertising. In other words, Hy Finn can represent the nebulous "average consumer" whose cash, California Oil would like to see in their tills...whose loyalty California Oil wanted for their brands...whose undivided attention they expect for their ads.

Chevron's wisecracking little salesman evolved from drawings made by Jack Goldsmith, BBDO's television art director. He was given a name by fifteen or twenty members of the agency's creative staff, who dreamed up about three hundred names. Finally they settled on Hy Finn because of the elaborate sterns on the late-model cars.

Surveys indicated that Hy Finn's first job, impressing on motorists the fact that they could "buy Chevron gas at the Calso sign," was a success. People not only knew that they could buy Chevron gas at the Calso sign, but frequently named a specific station when they were interviewed.[66]

Why did Hy click? Primarily, he was different. No organization man, he was sarcastic and hypercritical of

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66. "Hy Finn: Chevron Star In The East," Printer"s Ink, August 18, 1961, p. 85.

conventional ad claims. His nasal voice (actually belonging to Paul Ford, Colonel on Phil Silver's "Sargeant Bilko Show"), coupled with a progressively styled cartoon (flatheaded with both eyes on the same side of his nose), harangued drivers—warned them their cars would stop if they ran out of Chevron Supreme and promised that Chevron Supreme would enable cars to run backward as well as forward.

In the light of conventional advertising pitches the ads were silly. But unusual enough to grab attention. As one writer put it, motorists "laughed all the way up to the pumps." Articles began appearing in consumer and trade press. Letters came in, two from people actually named Hy Finn. Customers threw Hy Finn lines at California Oil station men. Suggestions for punch lines began flowing in.

California Oil decided Hy was valuable enough to use in the second phase of its change over, involving sign switches at 2,300 stations from Maine to Virginia.[67]

Changing a store front poses few publicity problems; changing 2,500 gas station signs from Maine to Virginia and

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67. "How Hy Finn Makes Irreverence," National Petroleum News, January, 1960, p. 36.

doing it simultaneously is, on the face of it, a practical impossibility. Forty-four sign erectors were hired to handle the physical job, but they couldn't cover the complete marketing area in less than thirty days. In other words, Bridgeport, Connecticut, would have new signs while Stamford, Connecticut, would still have Calso signs. It would be like this in every state. The question, then: how to spring 2,500 new signs on the public on the same day?[68]

In April 1959 large red bags decorated with question marks were pulled over the 2,500 Calso signs. And on June 1, Hy Finn launched a teaser campaign on television, billboards and newspaper pages. In the television commercials, Hy heckled a Calso dealer. The dealer would say, "Betcha can't guess what's come over our Calso sign," and Finn would reply, "How would I? Some smart aleck covered it up."

On June 13, 2,500 dealers took the bags off their signs. And at the same time, a month-long advertising campaign was launched, built around Hy Finn's wisecracks about the new

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68. Max Barry, Best Ad Campaign Presentation - 1959, A Report to the Annual Association Of National Advertisers Meeting, Hot Sptings, Virginia, November 8 to 11, 1959, Prepared by the information service for A.N.A. Members (New York: A.N.A. Inc., 1959) p. 5.

Chevron signs.

"Wonder what they are going to do with those old Calso signs?" he asked in one ad. In another, a dealer asked, "Know what that famous Chevron sign means, Mr. Hy Finn?" and got the reply, "Yep, Next time you look for a Calso station...you'll find a Chevron station."

There had been some initial doubts about the cover-up campaign; a firm doing business without a brand name for a month could risk losing its total identity. Here are the results:

A month after the unveiling, survey teams stepped in to gauge reaction. Marketing Impact Research conducted telephone and personal interviews in Maine and New Jersey. The recall figures were high. In total awareness of Chevron advertising in June, Chevron scored 96 per cent in Portland Maine...83 per cent in Nothern New Jersey. September was 91 per cent and 89 per cent.

In June after four and one-half weeks exposing the new sign, 81 per cent of the Portlanders knew the sign with the

name blacked out 83 per cent of the Jerseyites did. In September up to 89 per cent and 87 per cent. When interviewees were asked which gasoline they would buy, the Chevron brand racked up 78 per cent in Maine, 67 per cent in New Jersey.[69]

More concrete results? Chevron showed an immediate gallonage increase over Calso—even before the red bags were removed from the new signs. One survey showed California Oil's rate of gallonage increase had quadrupled.[70]

In the spring of 1960, Hy Finn initiated a contest—"Win enough gas to drive you to distraction!"

This was, by definition, $75 worth of gasoline, or about 350 gallons. Enough gas to drive to Distraction, Arizona. A total of 75,000 persons entered the contest and 404 won credit entitling them to $75 worth of gas. It was never discovered whether anyone who won really drove to Distraction.

Meanwhile, Hy Finn keeps on serving up slogans in television spots:

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69. Ibid., p. 5.

70. "How Hy Finn Makes Irreverence," National Petroleum News, January, 1960, p. 86.

"A tankful of Chevron Supreme will last for years...if you don't drive."

"Chevron Supreme is so good...even the dealers use it."

"In every gallon of Chevron Supreme there are four quarts."

In the latest campaign, the public is being offered a $4.25 Kodak camera for $2.25, with a certificate that can be obtained free at a Chevron station. "You can ask for this free coupon at any gas station," says Hy Finn in the ads, "but you'll only get it at Chevron stations." The print ads also proclaim: "Tell your friends you paid $500 for this camera. They won't believe it!"

The television-copy claims are modest, to say the least. The camera is displayed on the screen and Hy Finn then appears to say:

"It takes pictures."

During the past three-and-a-half years, Hy Finn has proved that a sense of humor can strengthen both a company's sales and its dignity. Each year since the little cartoon character appeared on the scene, Chevron sales have increased at a substantially greater rate than the average for the petroleum

industry. Moreover, surveys have indicated that motorists now are not only thoroughly aware of the Chevron name, but regard it as the product of a friendly, forward-looking company.[71]

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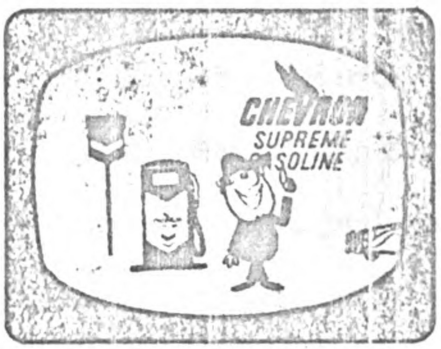
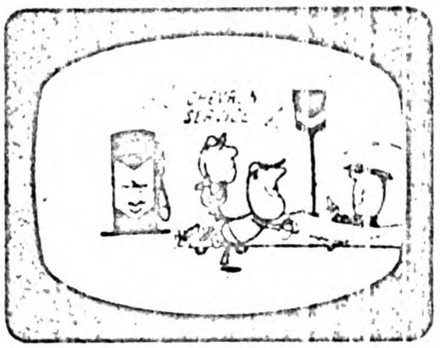
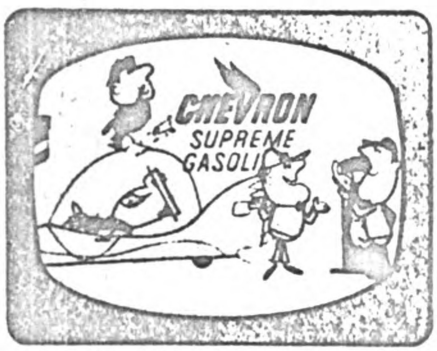
71. "Hy Finn: Chevron Star In The East," Printer's Ink, August 18, 1961, p. 30.

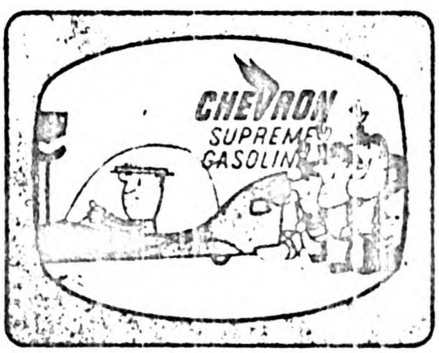
CHEVRON GASOLINE'S HY FINN





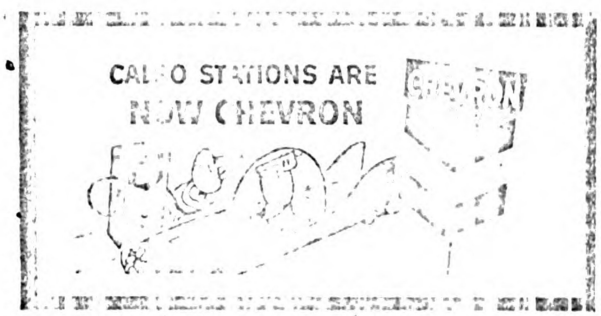
Service at Caloil stations is stressed in the newest series of commercials. The narrator tells the viewer to "watch how a Chevron station becomes a beehive of activity when a car pulls up for a tankful of new Chevron Supreme, the gasoline that gives you top performance from your car." Says critical Hy Finn: "And remember, a tankful of Chevron Supreme gasoline will last for years . . . if you don't drive your car."





Hy Finn Says . . .

- Chevron Supreme fits any shape gas tank.
  And remember: in every gallon of Chevron Supreme there are four quarts!
- This stuff is great. They oughta advertise it.
- I like Chevron Supreme so much . . . I bought an extra car.
- I like the top performance I get with Chevron Supreme gasoline. My wife likes the color.
- Chevron Supreme will not leave gummy deposits in your glove compartment.
- If your dealer doesn't have Chevron Supreme . . . you're in the wrong station.
- Chevron Supreme makes new cars run like new cars.
- You'll like Chevron Supreme so much . . . you'll wish you had a bigger gas tank.
- A tankful of Chevron Supreme Gasoline will last for years . . . if you don't drive.
- Remember: to really appreciate Chevron Supreme . . . you need a car!
- Every person buying Chevron Supreme Gasoline should be accompanied by a car.
- Chevron Supreme is a gasoline's gasoline.
- Chevron Supreme is a . . . uh . . . supreme gasoline.



What's in a name? It's still the same gasoline.

Maypo Cereal's "Markey"

In 1953 Heublein, Inc., Hartford, Connecticut, bought the Maltex Company, makers of Maypo and Maltex cereals. Heublein, which produces a line of ready-to-serve cocktails, cordials, and Smirnoff vodka, and imports several other whiskies, bought the Maltex Company because it wanted to further diversify into the food field. The company's A-1 Sauce is a major entry in the sauce field and offered ready-made sales channels for other products.

John Martin, Heublein's president, was shopping for products with growth potential. He recognized the success of pre-sweetened cold cereals and thought that Maypo, a maple-flavored pre-sweetened hot oat cereal, offered the same type of opportunity.

A year after it purchased the Maltex Company, and merged it into its food division, Heublein appointed Bryan Houston, Inc., as ad agency for the division. Since then Maypo's growing ad budget has been supervised by Floyd James, Heublein sales manager, and John Van Horson, the agency's account supervisor.

Today Maypo has coast-to-coast distribution in the nothern half of the United States and competes with such established cereals as Quaker Oats, Mothers Oats, H-O Oats, and Cream of Wheat. Although the company won't reveal Maypo's sales figures, the cereal reportedly holds the number two position among hot cereals in some markets.

Maypo's steadily increasing distribution—and sales—can be traced directly to the fact that since 1956 all of its advertising budget has gone into television. Its commercials consistently score among the American Research Bureau's ten "best-liked" commercials.[72]

Maypo's success has been achieved by a spot television commercial which features a low-voiced but persistent young gentleman invented for Maypo by Don Hubley, animated cartoonist. Marky is a nag. He disrupts the household, climbs over furniture, awakens sleeping relatives to get his Maypo. Marky is a brat. He won't eat his breakfast no matter what inducements, arguments, threats his parents use until offered Maypo. Marky is diabolically inventive, continually unpredictable—and immensely funny.

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72. "Maypo's TV Spots Open Up New Markets," Printer's Ink, May 29, 1959, p. 48.

The nation's kids across the entire nothern tier of the nation took Marky (and Maypo) immediately to heart. Maypo bought late afternoon and early evening participations and adjacencies to air its Marky episodes. It wasn't long until parents too were looking up from their evening newspapers or leaving the stove momentarily to "catch the commercials."[73]

Before Maypo went into television, the company thought its sales had reached a plateau. Its modest ad budget at that time went mainly into newspapers and Sunday comic section. Ed Gerbic, Heublein's director of sales and advertising, recalls that "sales showed no appreciable increase, but did hold the line against competition."

As a hot cereal, Maypo reaches its sales peak from September through March. This period accounts for 75 per cent of annual sales. In 1956, when it was time to plan the next season's ad budget, the agency suggested that Maypo go into television.

Van Horson felt that television would be a natural

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73. "Impish Marky Helps 'Maypo' Sales," Food Field Report, November 9, 1958, p. 58.

advertising outlet for Maypo because children comprise the primary market for the cereal. It was decided to begin a spot television test campaign of animated cartoons directed to both children and their parents. The goal that was set was one of "subtle sell". In this way each Maypo commercial could be integrated into a story plot so that the viewer isn't aware of where the sell begins or ends.

Like many children, Marky is prodded by his exasperated father to eat his cereal. He bullishly refuses, but then, by some quirk, demands "I want my Maypo"—and gobbles up his cereal, leaving his father bewildered.

The Marky commercials are derived from the real-life experiences of an animated cartoonist, John Hubley, who tape-records conversations with his own son. The agency then weaves the selling points around these conversations. The result is commercials with remarkably true humor that appeals to both adults and children.[74]

Following its initial spot television use (New England

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74. "Maypo's TV Spots Open Up New Markets," Printer's Ink, May 29, 1959, p. 49.

and upper New York state), Maypo boasted sales up near an average 80 per cent in all markets, and in some markets the increase was as high as 186 per cent. In Detroit, six weeks after the cereal maker started its unusual Marky television campaign, the company set up a special 100-case display in a supermarket. With the combination of Marky brand identification (the cartoon figure appears on the box) established via television and the follow up store display, the 100 cases were sold out in a period of three days.[75] Besides Detroit, in 1957 Maypo included New York City, Philadelphia, Washington, Cleveland, Baltimore, Erie, Scranton and the state of Colorado. The television budget was again doubled and the schedule was extended to fifty-eight stations in twenty-seven markets. All the spots are one-minute films placed in or adjacent to children's shows.[76]

The boom has not let up—not even during the summer months. In 1958 Maypo sales passed a 1959-1960 estimate projected by the company, a feat more remarkable in view of

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75. "Marky's $1-Million Comeback," Broadcasting, July 14, 1958, p. 41.

76. "Maypo"s TV Spots Open Up New Markets," Printer's Ink, May 29, 1959, p. 49.

cold cereals traditionally out selling hot cereals by seven to one.[77]

In 1958-1959 the ad budget was raised to nearly $1,000,000, according to the Television Bureau of Advertising, and Maypo commercials went into 76 markets and 115 television stations.

Heublein's sales effort is directed at getting Maypo on store shelves before the advertising began. To be sure Maypo is in the stores in advance of the advertising, the agency helps to dramatize television spots by visiting brokers in new markets. They hold advance screenings of the commercials and show how sales have increased in other areas.

Marky displays attract particular interest among kids because they tie in with the commercials. This is responsible for unusual cooperation from supermarkets in setting up displays.

The most important evidence of Marky's success is the result of a poll taken in February, 1959 by C. E. Hooper, Inc. It covered the original New England markets, and showed that

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77. "Marky's $1-Million Comeback," Broadcasting, July 14, 1958, p. 41.

71 per cent of the families interviewed eat hot cereals. Of these families, 54 per cent had tried Maypo and of these 54 per cent, 67 per cent said the reason they tried it was the television commercials.[78]

Marky can be likened to some extent to the notorious comic strip character, "Dennis the Menace". In the one-minute commercials, Marky balls when he is offered the hot cereal (any child could understand this situation). Marky then is won over and apparently viewer identification with the character pays off.[79]

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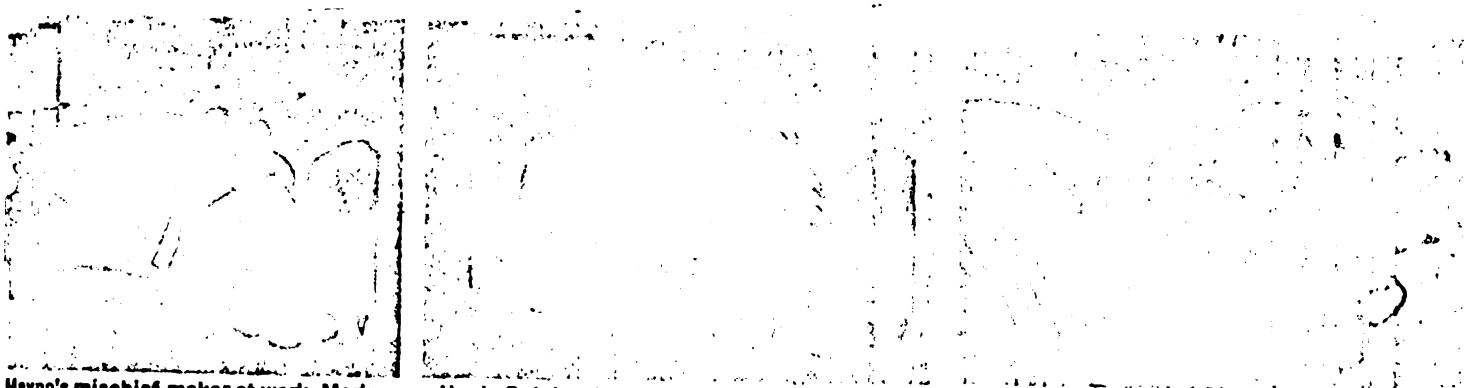
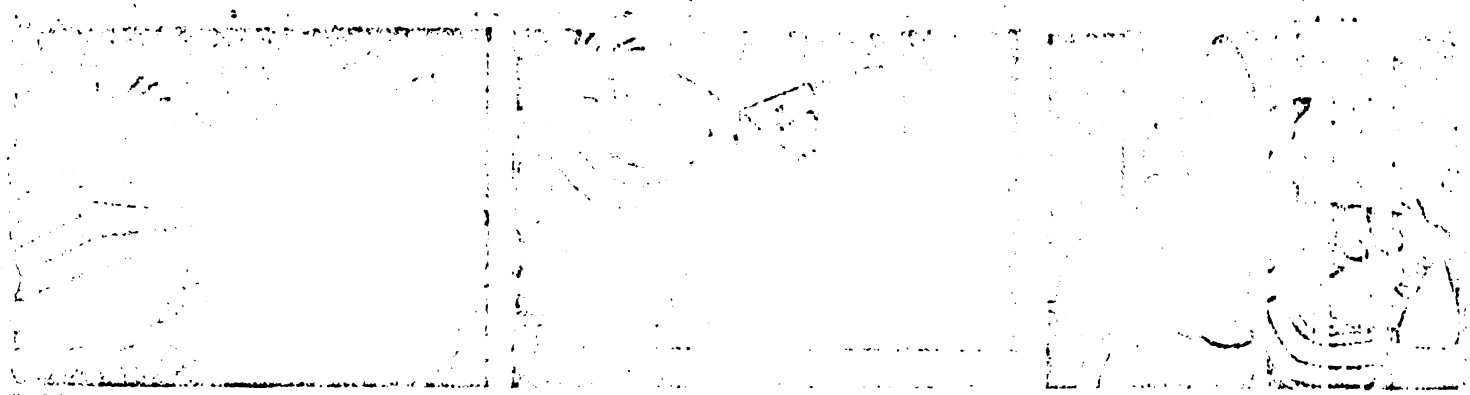
78. "Maypo's TV Spots Open Up New Markets," Printer's Ink, May 29, 1959, p. 49.

79. "Marky's $1-Million Comeback," Broadcasting, July 14, 1958, p. 41.

MAYPO'S MARKEY

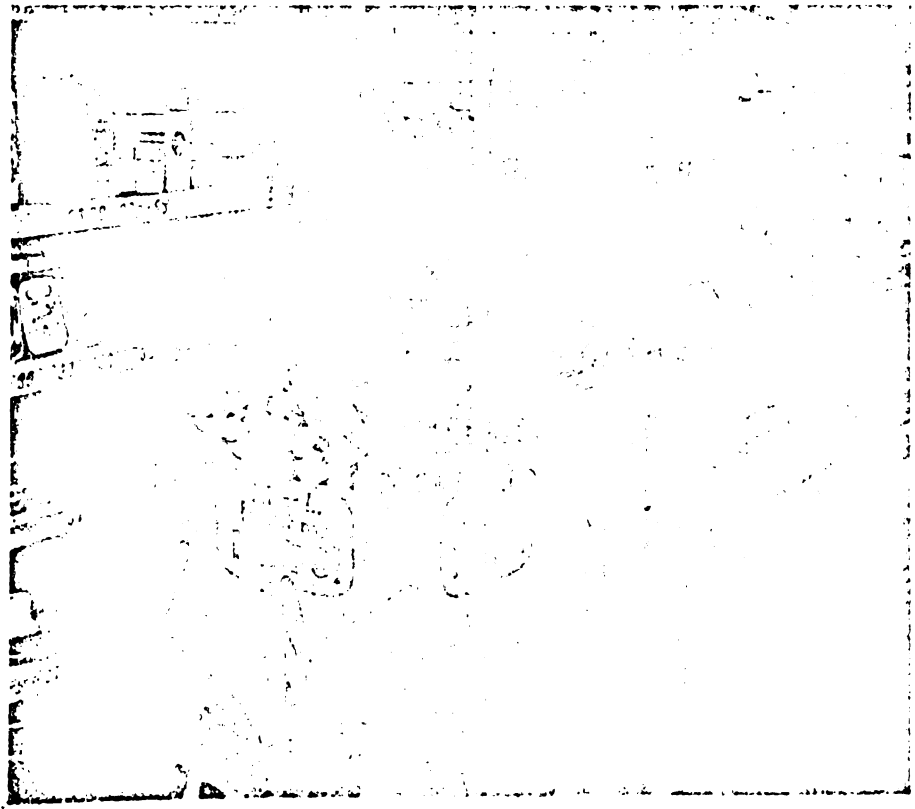


Maypo's mischief-maker at work: Marky sees Uncle Ralph asleep . . . wakes him . . . then pours hot water in Uncle Ralph's homburg, telling him



"I'm fixing your breakfast . . . do you like Maypo?" Finally, as Marky watches, Uncle Ralph sounds the theme of the commercial: "I want my Maypo"

Maypo merchandising men get fine cooperation from supermarkets in setting up displays



C. Animated Case Histories of Failure

Piel Beer's "Bert and Harry Piel"
and
Tip Top Bread's "Emily Tipp"

So far, the case studies have been success stories in animation. There are others that could be mentioned but would just be repetitious, as they are strikingly similar. But as in almost any venture, there are bound to be failures.

It has been a difficult job obtaining information on the success with animation but it has been an even more difficult job obtaining information when an animated commercial has failed. This, of course, is natural. No business, advertising agency, or animation firm wants to make public a failure. In these cases research has been undertaken to determine why the commercial failed. Sales figures of the product (up, down, or status quo) would indicate whether or not the commercial had any selling ability; but figures as to these findings are not allowed to be released.

But when the commercial is taken out of circulation there has to be some reason. Either it is obviously a failure or it is possible that the commercial, a previous success, has

"worn out its welcome" (the audience is tired of it). On this debit side, three of the East's best-known cartoon salesmen have met the blade of the advertising ax. Emily Tipp, a school-teacherish type who promoted Ward Baking's Tip-Top Bread through television spots, and who scored such success that until recently her likeness adorned the bread's wrapper and the firm's delivery trucks, is Ward's girl friend no longer. And Bert and Harry, first of the big successes among cartoon salesmen, have been killed off by Piel Brothers. They've been around for four years. But Piel's sales picture probably caused the brewers to take a new and jaundices look at its former star salesmen.[80]

In February, 1960 at a Sales Promotion Executive Association meeting, New York Chapter the question was raised whether Piel's sales have gone up as a result of its television commercials.

Ed Graham, creator of Bert and Harry with Jack Sidebotham when Mr. Graham was at Young and Rubicam answered:

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80. "Do Cartoon Characters Really Sell?" Sales Management, February 17, 1961, p. 35.

"In late 1955, Piel Brothers appropriated $56,000 for Young and Rubicam to test the commercials. Sales went up in the two test markets—Binghamton and Harrisbury—while there was a slight decline in sales in other areas with regular commercials."

Mr. Graham, who is president of Goulding-Elliott-Graham Production, New York, added there was no sales increase in Piels Beer when the commercials were first tested on radio.

He also added: "In 1956 there was a sales increase of 14 per cent and in 1957 a rise of 6.5 per cent. With delivery men's and salesmen's strikes in the spring of 1958, there was a 37 per cent decrease, in 1959 there probably will be a new record high."

Mr. Graham said Piel sales were declining the two years before the television commercials were introduced, but have been climbing ever since, except in the strike year of 1958.

National Beer Wholesalers Association and Brewery World figures (AA January 11, 1960) show Piel sold 1,395,000 bottles in 1954; 1,350,000 in 1955 and 1956; the 1,435,000 in 1957;

1,420,000 in 1958 and 1,460,000 in 1959. Among brewers this six-year period Piel ranked 15th, 16th, 16th, 15th, 16th, and 17th in the United States.[81]

With Piel's decision to drop Bert and Harry came an unexpected response from the public. After four years the "Piel Brothers," Bert and Harry's alter egos, had won a host of friends—mostly among the intelligentsia. The roar of protest over Piel's abrupt canceling of the campaign was easily heard in Staten Island, Piel headquarters. Piel found it had grabbed a tiger by the tail. Even with the justifiable excuse that Bert and Harry were no longer putting a head on their beer sales, Piel got bitten by the tiger. Instead of winning friends (if not customers) through use of the soft-sell cartoon approach, the company was, in fact making some people hopping mad. There are people in New York who drank Piel's solely out of loyalty to Bert and Harry. The more vociferous of these swear never to set lips to Piel's foam since their idols were dropped.[82]

In Piel's case, a cool summer slaked beer thirsts. And

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81. Ibid., p. 31.

82. Ibid., p. 36.

Piel's agency, Young and Rubicam, decided it was time for Bert and Harry to go.[83] This could also be a case where the advertising was far superior to the product. It has been said that Piel's Beer had a lot of one-time users, but this is just a guess.

In a letter from Thomas C. Sghia, Display Manager for Piel Brothers, this comment was released:

> Company policy does not permit the release of specific data. However, we can assure you that our Bert and Harry commercials proved to be a successful means of increasing sales.[84]

The obvious question is: Why, then, did Piel drop the animated commercials?

Emily Tipp, according to someone who knows the Ward picture intimately, presented some real problems. One Ward executive feels she "wasn't warm enough." He believes Emily was "definitely an advertising man's advertising character." And he thinks she appealed to upper-income groups, or the

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83. Ibid., p. 38.

84. Letter from Thomas C. Sghia, Display Manager, PIEL BROTHERS, Brooklyn, New York, August 18, 1961.

intelligentsia—not necessarily the same. But her offbeat, breathless (and, to many viewer, delightful) personality lost impact precisely where Ward sells most of its bread, with lower-income groups. "They just didn't dig her." At any rate, Ward gave her lots of exposure, east of the Mississippi, for 18 months, then quietly interred her in the elephant's graveyard for worn-out cartoon characters.[85]

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85. "Do Cartoon Characters Really Sell?," Sales Management, February 17, 1961, p. 39.

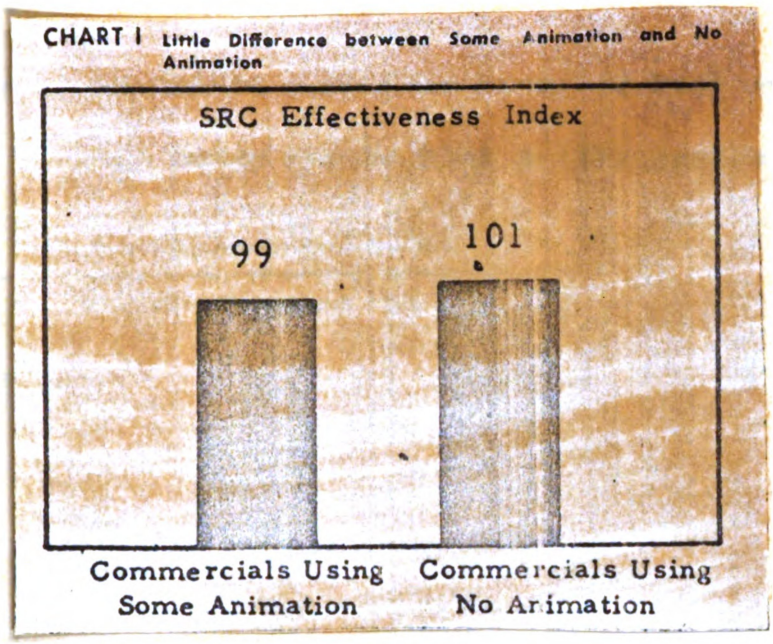
D. How Effective Are Cartoon Animals As Television Salesmen?

The homo sapiens cartoon characters have been previously covered, so we must not overlook the cartoon animals.

The Schwerin Research Corporation conducted a study as to the effectiveness of cartoon animals as salesmen. The catalogue of cartoon animals that have graced television commercials reads like a roll-call of the Ark. Lions, mice, frogs, rabbits, pigs, crows, lambs, kittens, roosters, wolves, horses, mermaids, dragons, elephants, have gamboled, flown, danced, run, crept, crawled and swum across American picture tubes.

In the survey, Schwerin reviewed 350 commercials. As Chart 1 reveals, commercials with some element of animation did not show up significantly differently than non-animated commercials, measured on the Schwerin Research Corporation's "Competitive Preference" index of effectiveness.

Clearly, the animated technique has produced good results. But over-all figures do not tell us very much. A closer inspection of cartoon commercials, however, is quite revealing.



SCHWERIN RESEARCH CORPORATION

Restricting our attention to those commercials that presented animated characters—human or animal or both—Schwerin found that cartoon animals, by themselves, far outstripped cartoon homo sapiens in terms of "commercial effectiveness" (see Chart II).[86]

Avoiding any pseudo-psychological explanation for this phenomenon, Schwerin suspects there are several factors that account for it. One is that—barring the registration of exaggerated user benefit (like the cartoon man whose eyes

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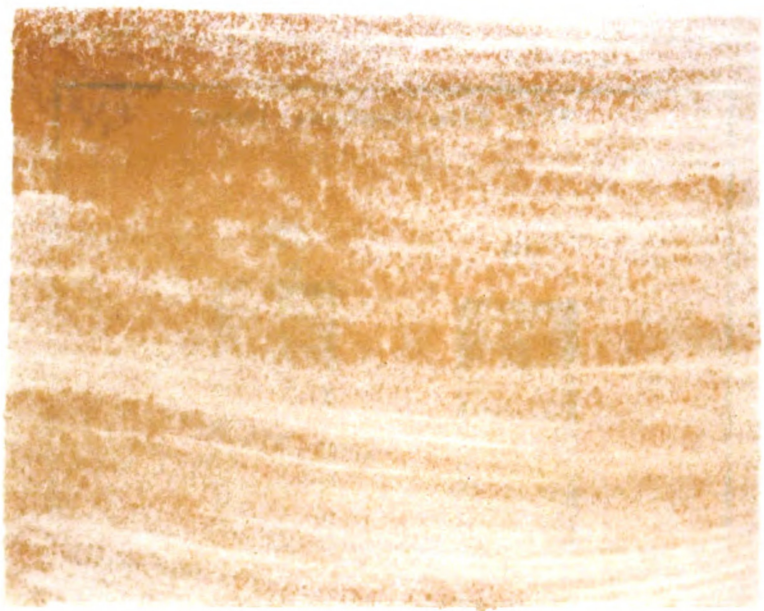
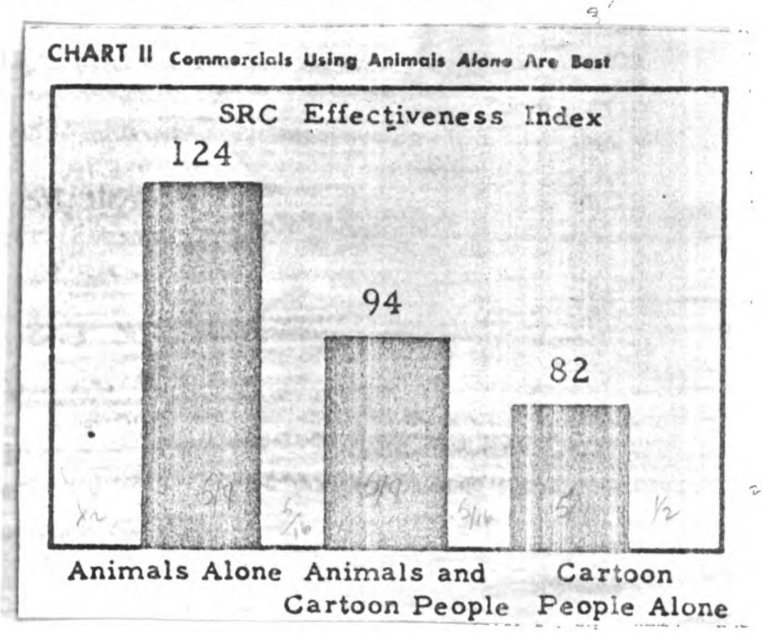
86. John V. Roberts, "How Effective Are Cartoon Animals As TV Salesmen?," Advertising Agency Magazine, October 11, 1957, p. 14.



light up when he drinks a certain brand of tea) — there is nothing a cartoon human can do that a live person cannot do. And the latter is far more convincing.



SCHWERIN RESEARCH CORPORATION

This leads directly to the second observation: With animated characters representing people, there is less of what Coleridge, in his criticism of poetry, called the "willing suspension of disbelief." A cartoon man is somewhere in a limbo between reality and fantasy. He has ties of mortal kinship to the rest of the human race—that is, to us. But he is in no sense believable.

An animated and articulate mouse, skunk, or dragon, on the other hand, transports us to a world of fantasy that is beyond the limitations of logic, reality or skepticism. And, in this fantasy context nothing is really impossible.

Those commercials that present both animated people and animals usually do less well than animal-only varieties, mainly because they attempt to do too much. Their story line and video tend to become confusing. A typical bad example combined animated musical instruments, a chicken sailing a boat, a food processing plant, a waiter, a man eating the product, in a busy kaleidoscope of dissolves, pop-ons, fades, and zooms that was an explosion of imagery rather than an integrated presentation.

Among the generally effective group of cartoon animal commercials, of course, certain approaches work well; others misfire. The following three points seem pretty well established from the review, however:

1. Be kind to animals. Violence, actual or implied, is definitely to be avoided in connection with cartoon animals.

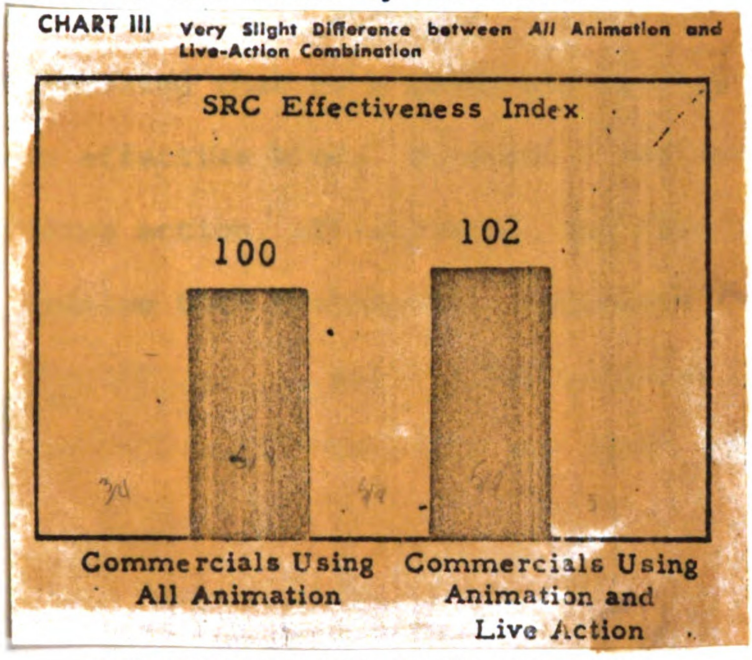
A number of commercials tested in which such dissimilar creatures as frogs, lions, birds, and pigs were subjected to gunfire and other forms of harrassment (in the sadistic tradition of some Hollywood cartoons) have proved ineffective.

2. Don't make the animal work like a dog. In other words, don't involve cartoon animals in hard sell. A whimsical animal delivering straight product copy can only detract from the sales message, and also from the creature's natural charm. Such commercials, at any rate, have not been successful.

3. Let the animal stand on his own four feet. Use cartoon animals integrally. The trademark character represents an effective example of this—the Pamper Shampoo lambkin, the kitten symbolizing a washing machine's silent action, Borden's Elsie, Kool Cigarettes' penguin, etc. Avoid dragging in an animal because it is "cute."

There are no rules governing the mixture of live-action with animation. Like almost everything else in commercial television, it depends on the original idea, as well as the habiliments with which that idea is clothed. Cartoon sequences combined with a live sell do very slightly better, on the

average, than all-cartoon commercials (Chart III), but exceptions to this are decidely the rule.



SCHWERIN RESEARCH CORPORATION

Cartoon animal commercials, committed as they are to entertainment values, generally get low remembrance of sales ideas. But they are, on the other hand, usually extremely well-liked. Their motivating power aside, cartoon animals generate pleasant, warm, amusing associations which adhere to the advertised brand and create a bonus of good-will toward it whose value is to some extent imponderable.[87]

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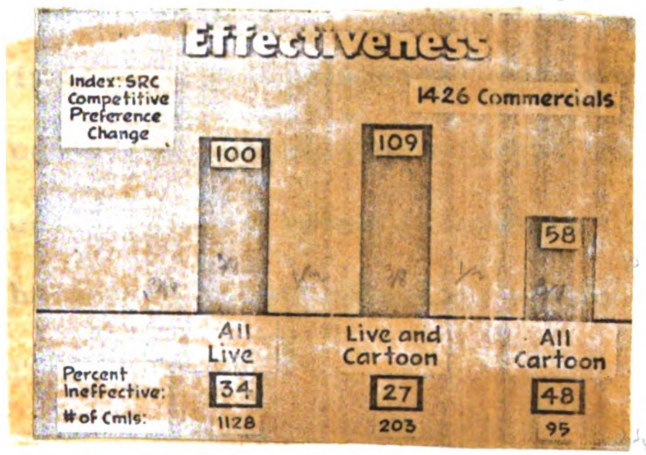
87. John V. Roberts, "How Effective Are Cartoon Animals As TV Salesmen," Advertising Agency Magazine, October 11, 1957, p. 15.

E. All-Cartoon VS. Live-Action VS. Combination Cartoon and Live-Action

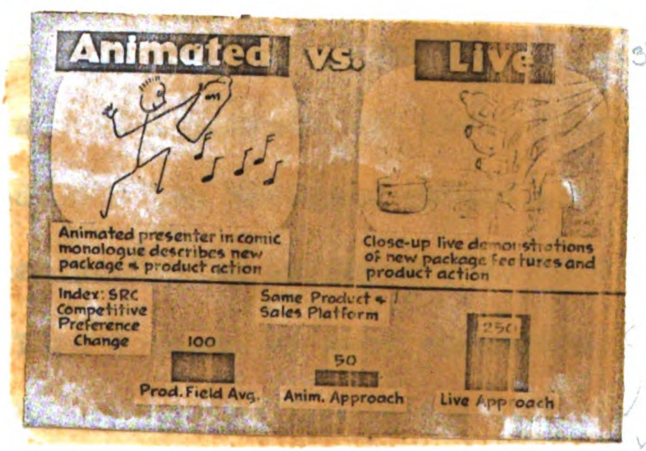
In 1958-1959 Schwerin Research Corporation presented a survey that revealed that as a group all-cartoon commercials are the least effective kind. In chart I the average effectiveness of live action, all-animated, and "hybrid" commercials that combine both techniques. Animation is not only well below the others in overall effectiveness, nearly half of all totally animated commercials are ineffective.



SCHWERIN RESEARCH - 1958-1959

Pure animation is the shortest way to the viewer's heart: it is considerably better liked than other types. Along with greater appeal, cartoon commercials (under which puppets are included as well as drawn animation) do as well in implanting their brand names as do the others. They fall down somewhat in registering copy ideas.

The chief difficulty facing the animated commercial is that of being too entertaining. The viewer is beguiled into enjoyment without being sold. An interesting case history was provided by Advertiser X. He introduced a new household product that featured a unique package. He first tried an amusing all-animated approach, in which a bumbling little cartoon pitchman declaimed on the virtues of the product. The animated pitchman literally "ran away" with the commercial, but in so doing the commercial performed an indifferent selling job. The advertiser then produced an all live action commercial which demonstrated the package feature and product action in terms of consumer needs. The latter approach became the most effective commercial yet tested in this product field.[88]



SCHWERIN RESEARCH - 1958-1959

88. "Perils And Rewards Of Animation," Schwerin Research Corporation Bulletin, Vol. VIII, No. 3, March, 1960, p. 1.

If pure animation's main danger is its over-commitment to entertainment, the judicious use of animation in conjunction with live action has much to recommend it. As the first bar graph indicated, "hybrid" commercials as a group averaged slightly higher preference changes than the all live-action variety.

There are two basic types of "hybrid"—with, of course, limitless variations. Type A generally starts with an animated segment (often whimsical but containing the basic fact of the product story) and follows this with a live straight sell. Type B is essentially a straight sell presentation that uses a animated sequence to illustrate "reason why" story of the product.

What distinguishes the best "hybrids" is not necessarily the following of a strict formula but their flexible use of the television medium. The decision should not be an either/or proposition when employing animation—as it is more often than not. Thus, Type A commonly uses animation to demonstrate ideas that would be awkward or impossible for live action (food, for instance, or a demonstration whose essence is literal realism). The flexibility of the live-animated

technique allows the advertiser to charm the viewer before selling him; to blend exaggerated humor with naturalistic demonstration.[89]

Type B is the commoner"hybrid" commercial. It is usually an unrelenting straight sell, with animation used where live-action would be impossible (e.g., the visceral plumbing of the remedy commercial). It represents an equally flexible, if somewhat less esthetically interesting, use of the visual medium.

The all-cartoon commercial should be approached with caution. Its promise generally outruns its performance. There is always the danger of too much fantasy for product selling.[90]

Most cartoon commercials contain a brief shot of the real package (if not, audience remembrance of the brand name usually suffers). But Schwerin Research Corporation's experience indicates that, in many cases, this is not going far enough. The inclusion of a short live-action sequence

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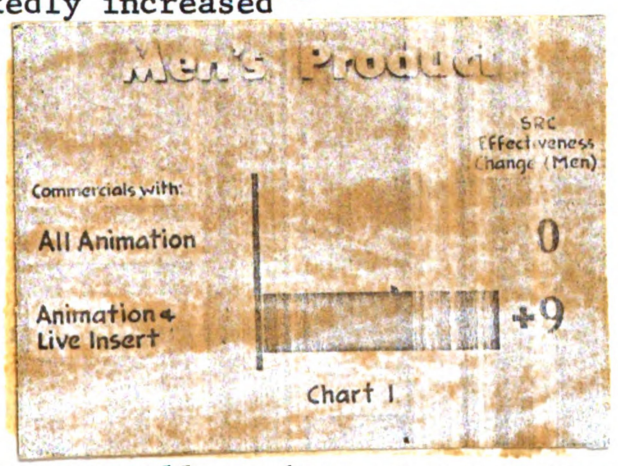
89. Ibid., p. 2.

90. Ibid., p. 3.

showing some important quality of the product can make the difference in whether an animated commercial is successful or not.

Chart I covers results of eight tests for a product used mainly by men. All the commercials had a "results" sequence (the man looking better or gaining a romantic or career reward because he used the brand). In the three examples w examples where this portion, like the rest, was done in animation, men were not favorably influenced at all. But in five other instances where this one part of the story was presented in live-action, men's preference for the brand was markedly increased[91]



The reader may well wonder, on a common-sense basis,

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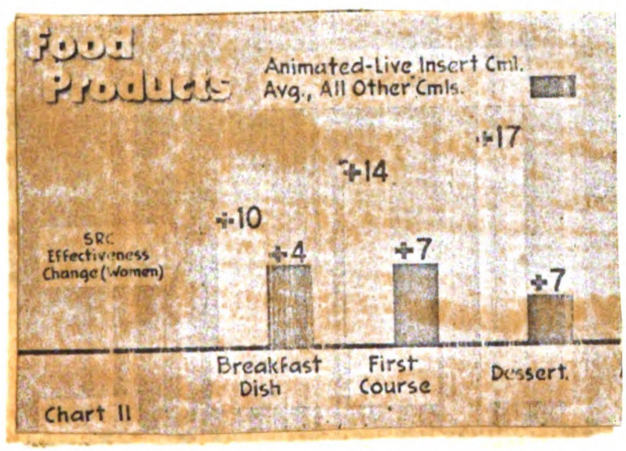
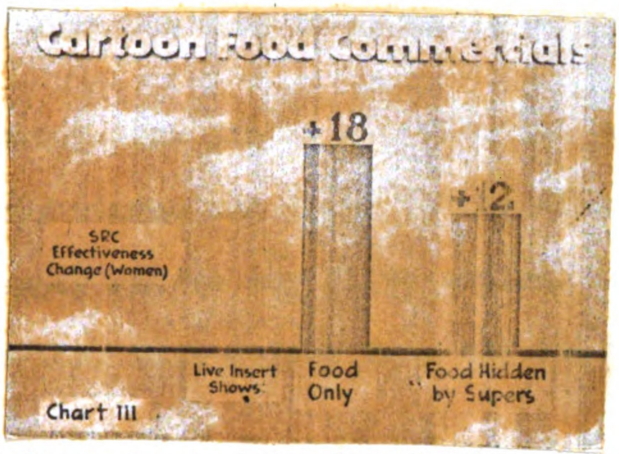
91. "Elivened Animation," Schwerin Research Corporation Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 4, April, 1958, p. 2.

how wise it is to advertise food products with animation, at least to adults. Yet Schwerin has records of cases where this has been done profitably because real shots of the food were included. Chart II shows three typical instances—for a breakfast item, a first course and a dessert—of cartoon commercials designed in this manner that did from two to two-and-a-half times as well as the rest of the commercials tested for thses same brands.



A study for another food, a staple item, is shown in Chart III and illustrates one danger to guard against in this area. Two animated commercials from the same campaign were tested. The major difference was the handling of the live-action section. In the first case, an attractive serving of the dish was shown, but in the second this same serving was covered by supers stating key copy points about it. The result of obscuring this "taste appeal" sequence was to

reduce effectiveness by about one-third.[92]



In television commercials for food products animation can establish a mood of pleasure. The addition of the live-action scenes showing the real food attractively prepared, or the product package clinches the sale by associating the brand with the felling of happiness that has already been established.

A current example of how this is done effectively can be found in the new spot television compaign for Borden's Rich Roast Coffee. This twenty-second commercial blends animation with live-action. The only audio is the Rich Roast Jingle.

The scene opens with an animated man busily painting the final strokes across a Borden sign hanging on the side

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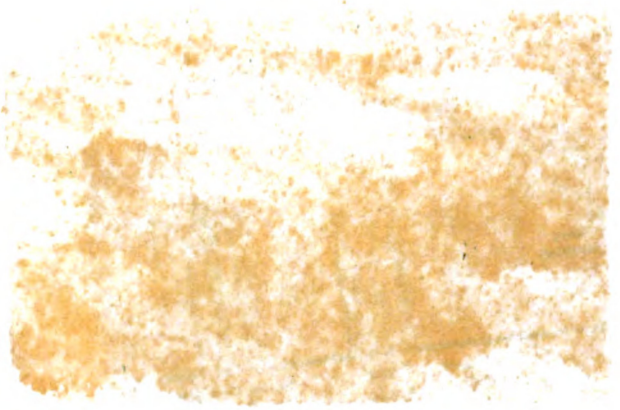
92. Ibid., p. 3.



of an office building. The window of an adjacent office is visible as the painter beings singing the words to the jingle.

Halfway through the jingle a live model perks her head out of the nearby window and joins in the singing. She holds out her empty coffee cup (live-action) and the painter fills it (animation) with coffee from his thermos bottle.

They toast each other, drink, and finally assume the posture of the girl painted on the sign, with the coffee cups held up to their eyes. In this case the animated man is the one who steps in front of and obscures his own sign, but not before the viewer has had plenty of time to read the message. At the close, the camera moves in for a close-up of the sign for the final sell.

Derby Food's sponsorship of the Disneyland show affords it the benefit of using Disney's character Tinker Bell to help sell Peter Pan Peanut Butter.

For the past several years Tinker Bell has greatly helped Peter Pan Peanut Butter establish sponsor identification. This small elf, which is seen regularly in the commercials, serves also as the master of ceremonies for the

entire Disney series.

This use of Tinker Bell serves two purposes for Derby Foods. First, it allows the commercials to be integrated discreetly into the programs, carrying the ever-present Disney character right along with them. Second, Tinker Bell is small enough to allow close-up camera shots of the product, while the elf demonstrates specific selling points.

In different Peter Pan commercials Tinker Bell has: outlined the shape of the Peter Pan jar by joining dots on the screen with a pencil; pasted labels on Peter Pan jars; sampled the product with a table knife.[93]

To summarize, research brings out the following strong indication regarding inclusion of short live-action scenes in cartoon commercials:

1. Animated commercials with live-action inserts will usually be appreciably more effective than those without them.

2. In the food field, there is reason to believe that

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93. "Live Action Puts Sell In Animated TV Spots According To Schwerin Research Corporation," Printer's Ink, April 4, 1958, p. 44.

this type of commercial can do a lot better than is commonly suspected. Very possibly the animation establishes a mood of pleasure and the showing of the real food clinches the sale by associating the brand with the feeling of happiness thus generated.

3. The live-action bit must be shown attractively and clearly. It is put there to establish a single, special impression, and should not be obscured or diminished in effort with supers or other diversionary matter.[94]

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94. "Elivened Animation," Schwerin Research Corporation Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 4, April, 1958, p. 4.

F. The "Spectacular" Animated Commercial

Schwerin Research Corporation has also done research on the "spectacular" commercial. In this type of commercial the disciplines and methods of "show biz" are employed to interest viewers in the merits of products as diverse as building materials and beer. By "spectacular" commercial is meant commercials that are deliberately stages production numbers—marked by sets, orchestral or choral background music, choregoraphed acting or dancing. These are the commercial equivalents of television "spectaculars," and at their most elaborate are quite costly propositions.

The "spectacular" commercial tends to be below average effectiveness.

Two of the examples of "spectacular" commercials were animated. The one for a household product contained cartoon utensils and food which danced as they demonstrated the product. The food commercial featured a cast of characters that included television cameramen, grips, a clown, a horse, an aerialist, and a chef—all of them animated, and all appearing, disappearing, and reappearing throughout a busy

sixty seconds. Both of these animated spectacular efforts failed utterly to move respondents to their respective brands.

Schwerin feels the main reason for the weakness of the "spectacular" commercial approach is its derivation from show-business rather than from salesmanship. Commercial television is, of course, the offspring of both showman-and salesmanship. Where the "spectacular" commercial goes awry is in its basic "show biz" orientation, to the complete over shadowing of the sales idea.[95]

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95. "...And A Cast Of Thousands," Schwerin Research Corporation Bulletin, Vol. VIII, No. 5, May, 1950, p. 2.

C. Commercial Life-Expectancy

Commercial wear-out has always been of interest to advertisers and agencies. Time, that will rust the sharpest sword, is no less inexorable in its effect on television commercials. And a commercial or campaign that has run its race is like a fighter whose legs have gone back on him: impotent and vulnerable.

There are two common misjudgements on the part of television advertisers in this regard: (a) dumping a good campaign too soon, or (b) staying too long with a deteriorated one. In the first case, the advertiser tires of his own campaign before the public does. Having been through the conception, gestation and birth of the campaign, he assumes, mistakenly, that everyone else is as overly familiar with it as he is; and concludes, prematurely, that the campaign is exhausted. And proceeds to throw out the baby with the bath water.

The second instance is perhaps the more dangerous. One leading American advertiser enjoyed conspicuous success during the first half of the decade with a single campaign for his

household product. The campaign featured an animated character who has become part of this country's folklore. The jingle he sang was almost hypotically catchy, and was shrilled by thousands of tiny children down the streets of the land. But although the product enjoyed a dominant share of the market, Schwerin Research Corporation Competitive Preference tests of the commercial in 1955 and 1956 indicated that the campaign was running out of motivational gas.

Further tests in 1957 confirmed the total depletion of the campaign. But in the meantime a competitor launched a new brand, representing a definite improvement on the product, and supported it with a hard-hitting television campaign. In the ensuing market struggle, the brand leader lost every engagement, and by early 1959—see graph page 102—was being hard pressed by the insurgent Brand B for share of the product market. Brand A had simply stood pat too long, both in terms of its product and its advertising. (Both needed, and have since received, over-hauling.)

One of the main elements in commercial wear-out is, of course, exposure. The accompanying graph, page 102, presents

a case history of the general relationship between exposure and effectiveness. The commercials for Products X and Y (same advertiser), when originally tested, were equally effective. Both were straight sell, and featured comparative demonstrations of brand superiority. When they were put on the air, Product Y's commercial was given four times the exposures of Product X's. When they were re-tested in May, 1959, Commercial X showed a mild drop in effectiveness, Commercial Y a severe loss. The advertiser was advised to stick with the Product X commercial and to find a new device or theme for Product Y.[96]

Exposure, important as it is, is not the whole story. All of the evidence indicates that, given initial effectiveness, the commercial that is "different"—possessing humorous animation, and extremely novel approach, an offbeat presenter, etc.—tends to wear out faster than a straight sell commercial of comparable effectiveness.

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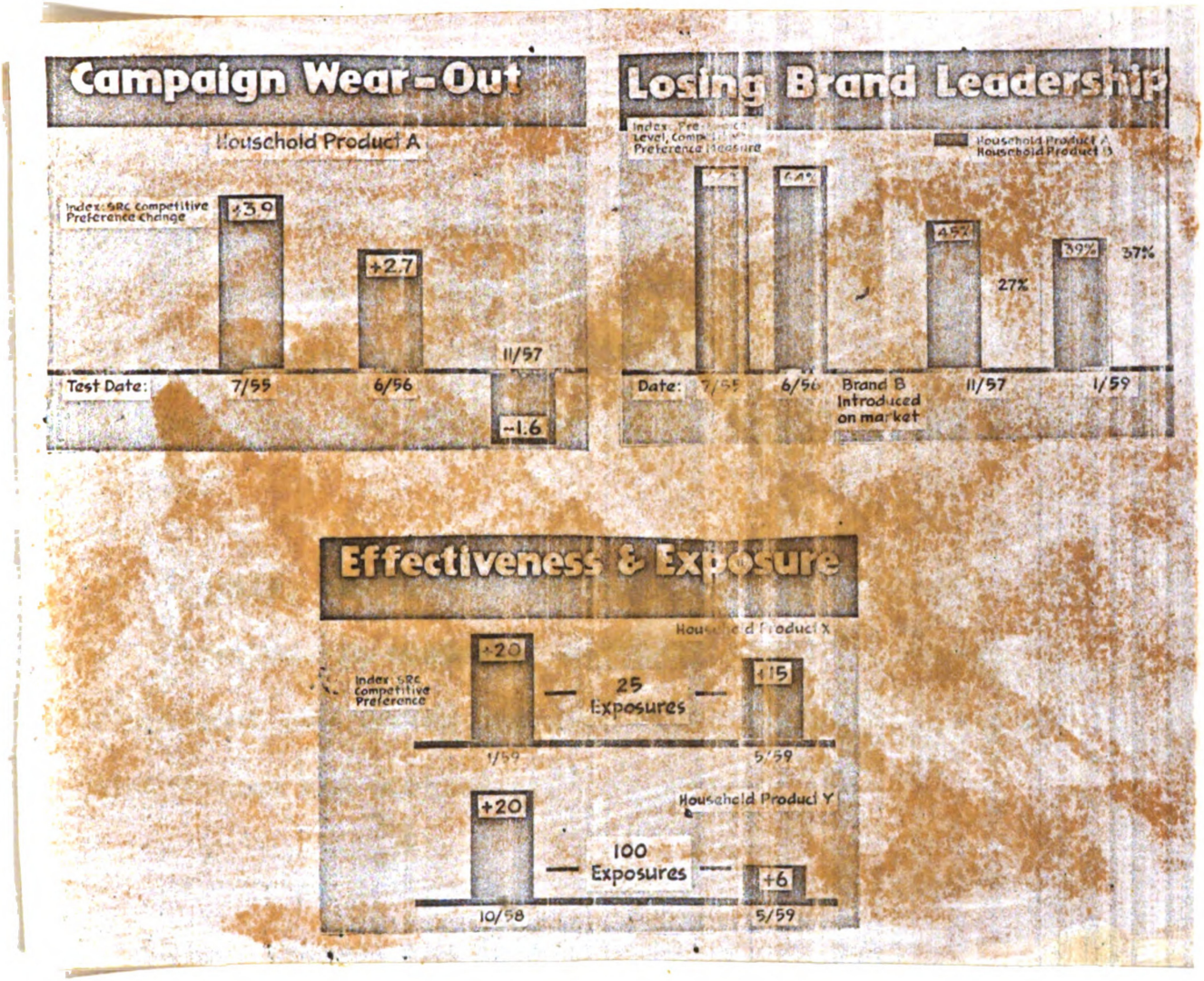
96. "Commercial Wear-Out," Schwerin Research Corporation Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 11, November, 1959, pp. 2-3.



Another example is a study for a low cost item for children. The maker was the sponsor of a weekly program with a fairly stable audience, so that circulation variables were not unduly complicated. Two commercials were tested before being put on the air. The animated example, based on a happy comedy approach, and the non-cartoon example, which had a more serious pleasure-in-sharing-the product

theme, were initially about equally effective.

The stronger commercial was naturally used more often during the ensuing year; by the end of that time, it turned out to have lost most of its effectiveness. Re-tested at the same time, the other commercial was about as effective as ever.

Plainly, two factors may have been involved here: (a) the difference in number of exposures, and (b) the possibility that the joking approach may have grown stale more rapidly than the subtler and more serious one.

In another instance a commercial for an expensive appliance was tested when first on the air, and proved quite effective. This commercial, which combined a cartoon character and live-elements, was broadcast pretty regularly from then on. Within half a year's time it was no longer doing much of a selling job. The suspicion was that the employment of this animated figure in exactly the same way to blame.[97]

In still another case Schwerin Research tested for a

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97. "Commercial Life Expectancy," Schwerin Research Corporation Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 10, October, 1956, p. 2.

household product a commercial in a campaign that was already a couple of years old. This too made use of a cartoon character, but the policy throughout had been to place the fellow in different situations, even though the basic campaign remained the same. At the end of the two years, because of the variety of execution, the formula was still going strong. Not long after that, though, changes in situation apparently no longer were enough to compensate in viewers' minds for the impression of sameness; for later checkups revealed that commercials in this series had fallen off markedly in strength. The campaign or the animated character (or perhaps both) patently was overdue for drastic changes.

Only a beginning has thus far been made in exploring this subject of the "life expectancy" of commercials. However, certain possibly useful thoughts can be offered:

1. The first logical determination is whether your commercial is effective to begin with. If it is not, repeated exposures will mean little in terms of effectiveness (though they may help to establish the brand name or keep it

to the fore).

2. The advertiser who uses a commercial or type of commercial heavily is well advised to check on its effectiveness periodically. If he does not, he may keep airing it long after the life has gone out of it; and he will also be unable to pinpoint the strategic moment for initiating a policy change.

3. Commercials of equal initial effectiveness do not necessarily wear out at the same rate. They will commonly do so if they are similar in type (both animated or both live-action) or in treatment (both demonstration or both "mood"). If not the same in these respects, they may or may not wear out at the same rate.

4. Granted equal initial effectiveness, a well liked commercial of the same type will usually endure better than a disliked one (but a well liked commercial is not necessarily an effective one).

5. It is possible to get more mileage from a campaign by introducing slight variations in the basic commercial rather than continuing the same, completely unvaring treatment.[98]

98. Ibid., p. 3.

G. Comments from Harry Wayne McMahan

In a letter from Harry Wayne McMahan, renown television commercial authority, these comments have been extracted:

> Selling abilities: no one has any authenticated data on this point. Schwerin has reached certain conclusions—which I disagree with and can disprove.
>
> At Leo Burnett, I recall, we tested a live commercial on Allstate Insurance against a cartoon. The live won 2/1. Two nomths later we tested the same cartoon against a new live commercial. The cartoon won 3/2! Which proved nothing (except that maybe the cartoon grew in intermittent exposure—and the subject matter of the second live commercial was less interesting to the public).
>
> Beware of generalities in this business. Most flat statements about the success or failure of cartoon—or its elements—can be disproved.[99]

With these statements, let us proceed to the conculsion:

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99. Letter from Harry Wayne McMahan, August 21, 1961.

CHAPTER V

CONCULSION AND SPECULATION

Advertisers, advertising agencies, and animation firms are all in business. Whether selling a product or service they are all competing with others in the same business. Therefore, no one wants to reveal his success or failures, for obvious reasons. Eventually the success or failure will be known, but not the reasons for it. It is this problem that has made this thesis a distressing study. In the thesis only the fringes have been touched upon: the heart, core, the basic facts are not available, simply because of lack of information and also the many variables that confront the industry to which this study is related.

In the animated television commercial, or any commercial, the basic job is to sell the product. If this job becomes secondary in importance to art form, or creative whims, etc., then the advertising agency is wasting the clients money and the animation firm their time and energy.

There are times when animation seems to be the ideal vehicle for promoting certain products. At the present there are several animated characters that are acting as salesmen for ideally suited products. One of these is the comic strip characters, "Peanuts", created by Charles M. Schulz. Ford

and J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency have decided to incorporate "Peanuts" to sell the Falcon. Like "Peanuts" the Falcon car is compact is size, is fun (to drive) and has adult appeal.

General Electric has reasoned that the humorous approach, with squinty-eyed "Mr. Magoo," would cause the public to light up at the mention of its light bulbs. "Mr. Magoo" is a creation of United Productions of America and a popular cartoon character of the movies for years.

At present there are no facts available as to the selling abilities of these animated characters. These companies do not rely on animated commercials soley, but they have other vehicles and mediums also working for them.

Most cartoon characters that have been successful have not only been used in television animated commercials, but have been used in all the mediums and point-of-purchase sales. General Electric and Falcon are following this formula to some extent, so let us wait and see how successful their campaigns develop.

According to Schwerin Research Corporation, animal

animated cartoons are well liked but are not conducive for remembering product facts. If the advertiser has a monopoly or controls an industry that is particularly interested in public relations and doesn't have to worry about sales, then possibly animated animals used creatively could be successful for them. Schwerin Research reports that the "spectacular" animated commercial is ineffective. Schwerin Research reports that the "hybrid" (animated combined with live-action) commercial is the most effective when compared with all-animated combined with live-action) commercial is the most effective when compared with all-animated and all live-action. But then how do you explain the success of Maypo and Chevron Gasoline which have used animation exclusively?

Can we say there is a formula which holds true in every instance concerning animated television commercials? Mr. McMahan said:

> Beware of generalities in this business. Most flat statements about the success or failure of cartoon—or its elements—can be disproved.

In final analysis, each product must have a commercial tailored to fit its needs—to sell. There is no standard budget or time of production. Each commercial must have its

own style, its own identity. If an animated commercial for one type of product or service is a success, it is not likely that another product of the same type can receive the same success. On the contrary, the first product usually benefits from the "carbon copy".

Animation, at present, is popular because of the success it has had with certain products and services. The current trend is toward "limited" animation because it is faster and inexpensive when compared with full-animation. There is presently a leaning toward the more modern stylized type of animation. Yet, there are fads which come, go and return again, at the moment, humor seems to be getting its day in the sun, but there has been humor before, it will decrease and will increase. Along will come another technique which will suddenly become an overnight success and everyone will "jump on the bandwagon"—"the viscious circle".

This is the way thing operate with all the television commercial techniques. And...after all...this is what makes advertising the interesting, exciting, ever-changing business it is.

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