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CREATING EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING:

MAJOR PRINCIPLES

By

Nancy Joanne Fortino

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## ABSTRACT

### CREATING EFFECTIVE ADVERTISING: MAJOR PRINCIPLES

By

Nancy Joanne Fortino

An effective advertising message is that which is interesting and valuable to the person it was designed for. Advertising should be interesting to the best prospects for the product being advertised rather than to people who make advertising.

Productive advertising, or creative advertising, in the best sense of the word, talks to the consumer about the things that interest him. The message designer uses words and pictures that the consumer can appreciate and understand.

Creativity is the impetus behind the entire message design process. Different aspects of creative abilities are involved in the selection, organization and coordination of a variety of message related elements ranging from consumer information to visualization and execution via visual and verbal elements.

The message design process involves defining message objectives and selecting and ordering product

benefits, those product advantages which influence consumer purchase. The benefit 'proposition' as it becomes in message form, is the backbone of the message, dictating final message execution.

In final form, the message is made up of visual and verbal communication tools; headline, copy and illustration, the selection and arrangement of those elements are subject to execution theories and design principles.

The purpose of this thesis is to research the message design process, beginning with an investigation of the aspects and functions of creativity. Further it covers information organization via the copy platform which entails setting message objectives, selecting and ordering product benefits, defining and profiling consumer characteristics and deciding upon a plan of execution, known as creative tactics. The result of the investigation is a defined process which, when followed, will produce effective advertising messages.

For Charlie

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In deepest appreciation of Dr. Charles R. Mauldin, who patiently gave of himself, his time, and his knowledge in guiding me through the completion of this thesis. His leaving will create a void which will be impossible to fill.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
 CHAPTER	
ONE: THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF CREATIVITY IN ADVERTISING MESSAGE DESIGN . . . . .	5
Stimulating Creativity . . . . .	16
Reading and Observing . . . . .	16
Research . . . . .	17
Where To Begin With an Advertising Problem . . . . .	18
 TWO: INFORMATION ORGANIZATION: COPY PLATFORM . . . . .	 21
Message Objectives . . . . .	24
Benefit Selection . . . . .	25
Consumer Profile . . . . .	30
Creative Tactics . . . . .	32
Copy . . . . .	33
Graphics or Visuals . . . . .	34
 THREE: EXECUTION DECISIONS . . . . .	 35
Execution . . . . .	35
Execution Theories . . . . .	38
Design Theory . . . . .	38
Balance . . . . .	40
Proportion . . . . .	41
Sequence . . . . .	42
Unity . . . . .	43
Line Theory . . . . .	44
Mood in Line . . . . .	46
The Emotional Impact of Letter Shapes . . . . .	48
Tone and Texture . . . . .	50
Making Design Articulate . . . . .	51
Symbolism in Message Design . . . . .	52

FOUR: ELEMENT SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT	
IN EXECUTION . . . . .	57
Approach . . . . .	59
Headlines . . . . .	66
Copy . . . . .	70
Selecting Typeface: Choosing the	
Right One For the Situation . . . . .	81
The Visual Element: Illustration and	
Art . . . . .	88
Which Is Best? Art or Photography . . . . .	97
Indicating Art in Layout . . . . .	98
Trademark: Logo Designs . . . . .	100
Layout . . . . .	103
Layout Formats . . . . .	104
Mondrian Layout . . . . .	104
Picture Layout--Post Layout . . . . .	106
Copy-Heavy Layout--Editorial	
Layout . . . . .	108
Frame Layout . . . . .	110
Picture-Cluster Layouts or Circus	
Layout . . . . .	111
Comic-Strip Layout or Multi Panel	
Layout . . . . .	113
Silhouette Layout . . . . .	114
Type-Specimen Layout . . . . .	115
Rebus Layout . . . . .	116
Color . . . . .	118
The Use of Color in Layout . . . . .	118
Symbolism of Color . . . . .	120
SUMMARY . . . . .	123
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	125

## INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to understand the makings of an effective advertising message, I have reviewed the literature on various aspects of message development. The purpose of this paper is to present my conclusions concerning the art of developing effective advertising messages, based in part on advise and evidence presented in the literature and on personal experience.

Because the realm of message design is so vast, I have limited my research to the areas of content selection and design within the message structure, and to creative energies surrounding the development process. Many advertising writers and tradesmen have written of the advertising process with polarized viewpoints and differing terminology. In an effort to clarify my findings, I have attempted to assimilate the information into a personal viewpoint. In reporting the synthesis, I have divided the paper into four parts:

- I. Creative energies involved in the message design process.
- II. Information Organization; The Copy Platform
- III. Execution theories (which influence message design;

Design Theory, Line Theory, Symbolism)

#### IV. Execution Decisions; The development of copy and visuals.

I am initially assuming that the message design process is a creative one. Creativity is defined as follows: "the process of combining ideas and materials and recognizing combinations of value to someone."

The role of the effective message to be used in advertising is to directly influence consumer thought and behavior. The message is usually an end result of long-term strategic planning and is within the realm of predetermined objectives. It is the 'concept' or idea carrier. An effective message is defined as:

Effective: producing the proper result, efficient, producing a striking impression.

Message: an oral or written communication, as of information, advice or warning.<sup>1</sup>

In order for an advertising message to be effective, it must involve the consumer in the following ways:

1. The message must be seen and attended to by the consumer.
2. The message must let the consumer know that the product is offering benefits he wants.

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<sup>1</sup>The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedia Dictionary.  
(Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary), Library of Congress Card Cat. No. 66-21606, 1966.



3. The message must convince the consumer that the product will deliver the benefits offered.
4. The message must tell, or remind, who is offering the benefits.

In order to facilitate effective message design and consequently, effective communication with the consumer, it is necessary to explore theories and principles surrounding the message development process. Chapter One explores creativity theories regarding definition, characteristics, and function of creativity in the message design process.

Chapter Two discusses the information gathering and organization task and defines the copy platform and its use which involves setting message objectives, selecting and ordering product benefits which will become 'propositions' in the message, profiling and examining consumer data, and defining creative intentions to be carried out in the final communication.

Chapter Three details various execution theories, including Line Theory, Symbolism, Design Theories and principles which will influence the effectiveness of the message. All advertising messages are made up of verbal and visual elements, the selection of which further dictates message effectiveness. Chapter Three provides definitions for these verbal and visual elements.

Chapter Four is devoted to putting all the theory recommendations together into final execution

decisions: the selection and development of the visual and verbal elements in the form of headlines, copy, illustrations, typefaces and logos. Discussion also includes recommendations of the use of layout formats and design principles to solve advertising problems and the use of color in message execution. Theories of copy and headline writing, photograph and illustration selection and examples are also included in this chapter.

This thesis was designed and written in second person in the hope that it would serve as an instructional tool for the advertising student or the beginning practitioner who is attempting to understand the creative aspects of advertising.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF CREATIVITY IN ADVERTISING MESSAGE DESIGN

The process of designing effective advertising messages involves a constant search for new ways to catch consumer attention and interest in what is being said. Gordon E. White states, "at the core of advertising is the function of thinking up new ways to state benefit propositions--that function is, inescapably, creative."<sup>1</sup> To be 'creative' in advertising is the fine art of solving communication problems. Leo Burnett defines creativity as, "the art of establishing new and meaningful relationships between previously unrelated things in a manner which is relevant, believable and in good taste, but somehow presents the product in a fresh new light."<sup>2</sup>

Creativity has many functions in the advertising process and to use creativity to it's fullest potential, it must be understood. Creativity is a human characteristic which can show itself in many forms, a characteristic

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon E. White, "Creativity, The X-Factor in Advertising Theory," Journal of Advertising, June, 1972.

<sup>2</sup>William Bernbach, Leo Burnett, George Gribben, David Ogilvy, Rosser Reeves, eds., The Art of Writing Advertising, Advertisers Publications Inc., Chicago, 1965.

which I believe, is inherent in everyone to a greater or lesser degree. It can be pushed, pulled, and developed in someone willing to work and is at full potential when in the company of a strong, confident attitude. Creativity, according to Maslow, is a matter of opinion. "All people, for the most part, are born with a potential for creativity . . . the potential is relative and will vary among individuals."<sup>3</sup> The range and abilities of creativity are great, for example, the child who builds a city in his sandbox is showing as much creativity as the individual who paints a picture or composes a concerto. Being creative and applying creativity in a problem-solving situation is dependent upon a confident attitude and knowledge of ingredients surrounding the problem, as well as possible solutions to that problem.

Dr. Irving A. Taylor, a social psychologist, identifies five levels of human creativity:

1. Expressive creativity--where skills are not important. The mind wanders, unrestricted in search of solutions.
2. Productive creativity--using creativity as a means to an end, as in the production of effective messages.

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<sup>3</sup>Abraham H. Maslow, Towards a Psychology of Being (New York: Van Nostrand, Reinhold Company, 1968), p. 136.

3. Inventive creativity--where the inventor uses old parts in new ways, where no new basic ideas are evident, the ingenuity lies in skillful use of tools and materials.
4. Innovative creativity--where the creator exhibits a skill for abstracting an idea away from realism in the design of something totally fresh and new.
5. Emergentive creativity--where the creator is working with entirely new principles.<sup>4</sup>

In the creation of effective advertising messages, you as designer may use any one, or all of the above types of creativity. Expressive creativity may be used when developing beginning strategy planning, ideation and sketchings. Productive creativity may be used in polishing up your ideas for show. Innovative, emergentive and inventive creativity may be used in the execution of ideas.

John Nazzaro, copy director for Chirurg and Cairno, Inc., Boston, says, "Creative thinking depends on a wide range of knowledge. Since creativity is basically the perception of novel relationships, the person who reads more will be better equipped to meet advertising challenges."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Irving A Taylor, writing in Creativity, An Examination of The Creative Process, Paul Smith, ed. (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1959).

<sup>5</sup>John Nazzaro, Printers' Ink (April 27, 1962), as seen in Roy Paul Nelson's The Design of Advertising, third edition, 1977.

As designer Ivan Chermayeff sees the creative person, in the field of message design, he is, "a borrower, a co-ordinator, assimilator, juggler and collector of material, knowledge and thought from the past and present, from other designers, from technology and from himself. His style and individuality come from the consistency of his own attitudes and approach to the expression and communication of a problem."<sup>6</sup> This points up another form of creative ability necessary in advertising message design: associative ability, recently explained by Leonard Reid and Herbert J. Rotfeld in their article, "Toward an Associative Model of Advertising Creativity." Associative ability is the 'creative' ability to associate facts, knowledge, personal experiences and other pertinent information related to a specific problem in the search for a solution. As applied to advertising, this ability is the link between research fact and ideation in execution, looking at a problem and it's related information and finding adequate and effective (advertising) solutions.<sup>7</sup>

Formal creativity theory states that using creativity effectively involves a process whose function is to

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<sup>6</sup>Quoted from interview in "Design 64:Directions and Dilemmas," CA:The Magazine of The Communication Arts, September/October, 1964, p. 81.

<sup>7</sup>Leonard Reid, Herbert J. Rotfeld, "Toward an Associative Model of Advertising Creativity," Journal of Advertising, June, 1975, p. 24+.

produce ideas. The literature is filled with various descriptions of the creative process and the steps needed to secure an end product. Alex Osborn's theory of creativity is one often referred to and the easiest to apply to the message design process. The process goes as follows:

1. Orientation: Pointing up the problem
2. Preparation: Gathering pertinent information
3. Analysis: Breaking down the relevant material
4. Ideation: Piling up alternatives by way of idea combination and synthesis
5. Incubation: Letting up, inviting illumination
6. Synthesis: Putting the pieces together
7. Evaluation: Judging the resultant ideas.<sup>8</sup>

In applying this process to advertising, you as message designer, should go through at least four of the above steps in the development of a message. First, study the problem, i.e., the product, the consumer, the market, the competition, anything surrounding the situation to better prepare yourself to handle the job. This is the exposure or orientation and preparation stage. Next, turning away from the job, let the subconscious work on the material gathered; this is the waiting period or incubation

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<sup>8</sup>Alex Osborn, Applied Imagination (New York: Charles M. Scribner and Sons, 1953), p. 125.

stage. In the illumination stage, the ideas and associations come, and the idea or concept is born. In the final two stages you execute your ideas and evaluate them. The process is more complex than suggested here, but this is basic creative theory, based on the premise that each stage of the process involves creativity as an impetus.

William Bernbach of Doyle, Dane, Bernbach believes that the heart of creativity is discipline. The discipline breaks down into four activities as applied to advertising. Mr. Bernbach implies that discipline is a creative force in the message development process.

1. Discipline to find the product's advantage.
2. Discipline to produce an ad that is sophisticated and aesthetic,

It's true that there is a twelve year old mentality in America, every six year old has it.

3. Discipline to manage. It takes a creative person to encourage and guide other creative people and provide them with the right information.
4. Discipline to develop social awareness and to be responsible to the public.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>William Bernbach, "Bill Bernbach Defines The Four Disciplines of Creativity," Advertising Age, July 5, 1971, p. 21+.



Using creativity, plus imagination to a productive (advertising) end involves control and organization. Disciplined creativity is goal-oriented.

A word about imagination . . . the word imagination means the process of creating images in the mind. But the imaginative way of conceiving ideas and images is not the logical way of ordinary rational thinking. Creative imagination, which differs from simple imagination, works somehow in the subconscious intelligence, sifting all the available data from experience, reshuffling it in different alignments, and adding to it. From the deepest recesses of the mind and emotional system, images and concepts are pulled to be presented to the conscious mind.<sup>10</sup>

Imagination is a fundamental and elementary requirement of the message development process. Creativeness denotes the advance form of imagination where it is positively used, abiding it to rigid rules and by meeting practical conditions. Creative imagination uses intuition as a catalyst and mixes knowledge with experience and ingenuity with innovation in searching for a better solution.

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<sup>10</sup>Harold Rugg, Imagination, Kenneth D. Beene, ed. (New York: Harper and Row), p. 28.

The creative advertising designer must discipline his imagination so that every thought, every idea, every word written, every line drawn, every visual and tactical decision made, contributes to the impact of the final impression.<sup>11</sup>

A very important function of creativity in the message design process is visualization, the ability on your part as designer, to 'visualize' an idea. This type of creativity is disciplined and goal-oriented, utilizing imagination, associative ability and personal experience to carry the idea from an intangible state to message execution state.

The chief qualification of the visualizer is the ability to think of a possible picture(s) or symbol(s) which will express the whole or major part of an idea.<sup>12</sup>

Visualization calls upon creative associative ability and imagination, using past experiences and associations to select the correct tools for effective communication.

It is as though the mind of the visualizer were a switchboard into which from one side enters wires from all possible aspects of product, while from the opposite side lead in a multitude of currents carrying needs and interests from the mind of the consumer. The 'visualizer' finds and makes idea connections, then gives them visual expression.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>R. C. Wilson, J. P. Guildford and P. R. Christensen, "Measurements of Differences in Originality," in Sidney J. Parnes and Harold F. Harding, eds., A Source of Creative Thinking (New York: Scribners, 1962).

<sup>12</sup>Thomas Blaine Stanley, The Technique of Advertising Production (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Inc., 1964).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

Visualization, transmitting the idea from intangible to 'touchable' form, is the most important creative phase of the message designing process because it involves crystalization of the idea into reality. Otto Kleppner defines visualization as, "the crystalization of an idea and presentation of it in its physical form, or to evolve a vivid manner of picturing a concrete statement by other than words."<sup>14</sup> The thrust of the idea, in benefit form, has to be communicated in a word, a symbol, a headline, and at a glimpse if possible. This is how visualization works: take the selected benefit (idea) and expand on it; mentally go through the consuming experience as the individual consumer selected might, identifying all feelings, sensations and cues involved with the benefits and deficits. (A product deficit is defined as a product characteristic which detracts from the product's attractiveness.) Everything has good and bad points, for every product benefit, there is usually a deficit; be aware of these because they can often be used in communicating benefits. Having identified benefit cues, those feelings, sensations and emotions surrounding and indicating the benefit, you must choose communication tools which will translate the benefit. When visualizing always think in pictures because

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<sup>14</sup> Otto Kleppner, Advertising Procedure, 4th edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 153.

"one picture is worth a thousand words." Keith Hafer and Gordon E. White suggest the following reasons for thinking visually:

1. Think visually if you want to get your message across fast. People respond faster to pictures than to words.
2. Think visually if you want to talk to all kinds of people. A strong symbol dissolves communication differences.
3. Think visually for attention.<sup>15</sup>

As all communication involves symbols (either words, pictures, signs or gestures), thinking visually begins with the symbol selection process.

The following case is an example of selection of benefits and visualization through to execution.

Product: Tulip bulbs

The benefits identified include the beauty of the blooming flower, the smell, and the enhanced look of the garden, yard and home. Subtle suggestions of leisure time and wealth to maintain the garden are inferred.

Product deficits have been identified as the expense of the bulbs, the delayed gratification from planting time to blooming time, the amount of labor and 'dirty work' involved in planting, and the short blooming period.

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<sup>15</sup>Keith Hafer and Gordon E. White, Advertising Writing, chapter 5, "Headline and Visual: Indivisible, West Publishing Company, St. Paul, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Boston, p. 57.

Visualization begins with identifying the principle benefit and choosing symbols which will transmit it. With beauty and yard/home enhancement as the benefit, you can begin to envision beautifully manicured lawns surrounding a well-kept home and gardens salted with groups of brightly colored red, yellow, pink and white tulips. Notice also that in your picture is the clear blue sky of a sunny day and children playing in the yard. Now, imagine the opposite: a neglected lawn surrounding a neglected house, no garden life, and a grey sky, as though rain was on the way. These are symbols which help to tell the story. Now, in execution, the positioning of these two houses, in a before-and-after sequence, would tell the story with force. Add a full-color, in-full-bloom close up photographic insert of the tulip to make the benefit obvious at a glance, tie it in with a visually and verbally convincing headline, and the result may be an effective visual message. To create excitement, to be effective and to cause consumer reaction, headline and illustration are indivisible. "If you pack the crux of your message into headline and visual element, you will almost surely be a successful communicator."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

### Stimulating Creativity

Innate creativity may, in truth, be a divine gift, or the result of heredity--depending on the point of view. It may result, in part, from exposure to a highly creative and stimulating environment.<sup>17</sup>

The creative function previously discussed--disciplined creativity, associative ability, imagination and visualization--need impetus and stimulation in order to be effective. Stimulation can come in the form of knowledge and experience--research, reading and observing.

### Reading and Observing

About reading and creative stimulation, John Nazzaro, copy director for Chirurg & Cairns, Inc., of Boston said:

Creative thinking depends upon a wide range of knowledge because creativity is basically the perception of novel relationships, the general reader (the one who reads more than just the advertising magazines) is better equipped--has more knowledge to feed upon. Reading combined with experience is a winning combination.<sup>18</sup>

As the message designer, you should be in tune with current fads, trends and mannerisms because every element of your work must be relevant. Reading will provide you with the insight you will need.

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<sup>17</sup>David Ogilvy, Confessions of An Advertising Man (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1964), p. 8.

<sup>18</sup>Taken from an exerpt of an interview.

## Research

Every aspect, every phase of the advertising process should have its roots in research because research gives direction and foundation to creative imagination, freedom to association and visualization. It is an attempt to uncover facts or to prove what is suspected. It is used to investigate and supply consumer, product, environment, market and other necessarily related data which will be influencing factors in the message design process. Research data comes in many forms, often supplied in summary form as computer print-out, survey analysis or narratives from interviews. Aside from this valuable information supplied, you should conduct your own research; use the product, talk with people who use it, question client and manufacturer and gather any information available in an attempt to uncover additional facts such as benefits, quirks and sentiments surrounding the product.

The research phase of the message process may be more time consuming than any other aspect of the process. It will involve other people within the advertising group who specialize and provide the bulk of the research. Research provides valuable information about consumer attitudes, opinions, needs, wants and beliefs, making element selection (the actual selection of copy, illustration, headline, etc., of the execution) a more logical and effective process.

Copytesting is one form of research which can pre-test your message and discover what element within the message doesn't work, and sometimes why it doesn't work. Copytesting involves screening the prepared message to a selected group of persons who may evaluate it on different merits such as memorability, relevancy, believability, and effectiveness, among others. A strong point to remember about research is that it provides invaluable insight into the problem at hand.

#### Where To Begin With an Advertising Problem

When faced with an advertising problem, it is best to set up a decision-making plan of action. With an understanding that the solution to advertising problems comes in the form of effective advertising messages, and development of those messages is a 'creative' activity. Listed below is a sequence of decision-making steps to be made in an attempt to solve an advertising problem.

1. Start with a basic understanding of the product, the consumer and the problem. Use all research data available, use the product personally if possible.
2. Work toward a singular concept or idea for the message. Each message within the campaign structure should be in tune with the overall theme.



3. Think visually from ideation to execution, in transforming the ad message from concept/idea stage to the physical communicae.
4. Execution should point to one approach and theme and one meaningful benefit offering, backed with convincing evidence. Utilize message elements to transmit the benefit offer . . . select the layout format, write copy, select the photographs/artwork, select typeface, design the layout, logo and color selection and vehicle selection.

When asked how he approaches an advertising problem, Gene Fredico, Director of Creative Services at Lor, Geller and Frederico, said:

I look at things a lot, television, print, collateral material. I want to get a feeling of what's out there. The best way to advertise is to say something a little different: otherwise you don't advertise, you camouflage--wasting the client's money.

To be seen, to be noted, is what I'm interested in--and having the image retained. Simplification is very important, if the product can stand simplification. Presentation keeps changing, based on what you're trying to sell. You have to be careful.

You can't separate image and message. That's the voice you use to make the content of what you're saying. Simplification, that's what it's all about. Absolutely pared down. You have to be strong. You have to have a good idea, too. Bill Bernbach is

great at putting ideas into words that make it easy to extend into graphics.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, creativity suggests new and better ways of carrying out a purposeful action, in this case the purpose is the design of effective advertising messages.

Creativity is an impetus in all phases of message design. The following chapters will cover the message design process; beginning with data organization, and benefit selection and following through the process to execution of the design in visual and verbal form.

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<sup>19</sup>Quote from interview with Gene Fredrico, Upper and Lower Case, The International Journal of Typographics, published by International Typeface Corporation, Volume five, Number one, March, 1978, p. 5.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INFORMATION ORGANIZATION

#### COPY PLATFORM

This chapter deals with organization and analysis of information about the advertising problem which is supplied by research and your own resources. With the assumption that the advertising campaign objectives and strategies have been set, we will concentrate on the information organizing techniques and the decisions involved from that point. The organization tool suggested by most practitioners is the 'copy platform.' The result or end-product of a copy platform is a group of 'raw materials' to be used in copy and visuals.

"Copy platform" is a term which refers to the product of a variety of information gathering and storing activities. By following a copy platform, you are forced to think the entire problem through. Essentially it is a plan which categorizes information about the individual message objectives; the description of principle product advantages, called product benefits, descriptive information concerning the selected targeted audience, and the

intended 'creative tactics,' intended to visually and verbally solve the communication problem. Broken into an outline form a copy platform is structured as follows:

- I. Message Objective
- II. Benefit Selection
- III. Consumer Profile
- IV. Creative Tactics

Copy platform uses and techniques vary among practitioners, some using a detailed outline to follow in data organization, others writing brief descriptive paragraphs, and others making only mental notes. Whatever style you develop, the organization process is necessary and the following outline is suggested in a copy platform format:

- I. Message Objective: The message objective defines what the message will do. Its function is to give the message designer direction and states the message's purpose.
- II. Product Benefit: A product benefit is defined as any physical, psychological and emotional advantage or gain a consumer receives from the use of a product. A product can offer many

different benefits, subject to individual consumer's opinions, attitudes and preferences. The product benefit is communicated as a proposition and is the single most important ingredient in the advertising message.

- III. Consumer Profile: Consumer profiling is the collection and organization of information about the consumer, formulating a consumer/product relationship.
- IV. Creative Tactics: Creative tactics refers to planned execution of the message into final communication. It is a creative process because it involves combining elements and making something of value to someone. Creative tactics calls for explanation of the intended execution; the verbal and visual elements described in short paragraph form. Included in the creative tactics is a definition of the intended benefit proposition, or USP, Unique Selling Proposition, as defined by Rosser Reeves, and the creative approach.<sup>1</sup> Also

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<sup>1</sup>Rosser Reeves, Confessions of An Advertising Man  
(New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1964).

intended selection of medium to be used in execution, for example: radio, 30 second message, humorous dialogue.

As you are developing the copy platform, research should provide the bulk of data, including detailed information about the product and consumer's individual conscious and unconscious needs and desires. The following paragraphs further define the separate parts and functions of the copy platform.

### I. Message Objectives

This is a statement of the message's intended impact, anticipated influence upon the audience. A usefully stated objective succeeds in communicating an intent. The objective should be written in terms of the intended behaviors of the target market. An example of a message objective:

To persuade Mrs. J. that Dove For Dishes dish detergent is mild and gentle on hands when used for washing dishes.

The objective defines the goal and will communicate the expected consumer behavior and conditions surrounding that behavior.<sup>2</sup> The objective is stated in terms of the overall strategy, as each individual message may become one of a

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives (Belmont, California: Fearson Publishers, Inc., 1975).

series within a campaign. Writing a message objective which is realistic and effective means that you must have an understanding of the consumer/product relationship.

## II. Benefit Selection

Benefit selection is a creative endeavor because it calls for you to go deep into the consuming process, using imagination and associative abilities to draw out the real product benefits. The selection of benefits has been defined as:

A process which starts by identifying and selecting for address a consumer 'want' which is reasonably intense and hopefully is crucial in causing a purchase to be made. The prospects will be relatively easy to induce . . . if an attribute can be selected which will stimulate and cause the desired response.<sup>3</sup>

A product benefit has been defined in Funk & Wagnall's Dictionary as: benefit--"that which is helpful; advantage, profit. To profit from, to gain from."<sup>4</sup>

The strategy behind benefit selection is based on the premise that every product has some potential good or benefit for some consumer. The benefit selection theory has many other names in the literature, the closest in thought and ideal is Rosser Reeve's 'Unique Selling

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<sup>3</sup> , "Advertising WRiting and Human Behavior," Advertising Writing, Publishing House, 1977, Chapter 2, p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedia Dictionary (Funk and Wagnall's Standard Dictionary).

Proposition' (USP). The USP theory, like benefit offering says, "offer the consumer something different, unique and individualistic." According to Reeves, every product has a USP to offer to a consumer, and when it has been discovered and decided upon, it should be repeated in ad after ad.<sup>5</sup>

Burton Hotchkiss, in his book, Advertising Copy, states that he always asks himself before beginning the benefit selection process, "What response do I want from the consumer?" From there he finds the benefit, follows it with evidence in the form of facts or demonstration, and then proceeds to visualization and execution.<sup>6</sup>

In their book, Advertising, John S. Wright, Daniel S. Warner, and Willis L. Winter, Jr. draw a distinction between selling points and benefits. Selling points are facts about or attributes of the product. Benefits are satisfactions that result from using the product. In most cases it is best to develop copy around benefits.<sup>7</sup> The selection process should have its roots in research, providing insight into consumer needs, wants and fears.

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<sup>5</sup>The Art of Writing Advertising, conversations with William Bernbach, Leo Burnett, George Gribbin, David Ogilvy, Rosser Reeves, Advertisers Publications, Inc., New York, 1965.

<sup>6</sup>George Burton Hotchkiss, Advertising Copy (New York: Harper Brothers, 1947), p. 27.

<sup>7</sup>John S. Wright, Daniel S. Warner, Willis L. Winter, Jr., Advertising (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1971), p. 379.



Mentally going through the consuming process from the consumer's standpoint will provide additional insight. Think of the consumer as an individual (whose personality you've come to know through research 'personality profiles' or similar insight-giving data), and imagine how he would react in a given situation. You are human, think how the product and consuming process is affecting you . . . what are your personal emotions surrounding the product and its benefits. While the consumer targeted for the message may be much different than yourself, consider some of the basic human needs, wants and emotions which are universal and which can apply to the particular consuming experience. Selecting benefits may be one of the most difficult aspects of the message design process because it calls for imagination that puts you inside the consumer's experience. The following is an example of putting yourself inside the consumer's head, going through the consuming experience:

The product in question is wooden yard fencing made of tightly woven pine slats, available in heights ranging from 4 ft. to 12 ft. In an attempt to determine the principle consumer benefits, begin by imagining who the consumer is and how he would feel about the fencing.

He is a young man, in his mid-thirties, who owns his own home, makes a good living (\$25-\$35,000), and is living in a suburban area where the homes sit close together on small lots. Identifying his position and his life style will make talking to him and selling him on the fence an easier task. (Think of the situation as any conversation with a friend might go, you know much about your friend and his situation, making communication with him easier.)

Assume that the consumer has young children and a wife and entertains often, using his back yard as a focal point for his entertainment, especially in the summer. He is not necessarily a garden buff, but is concerned with the upkeep and general appearance of his home environment. Because he uses his backyard often and because his neighbor's house is so close, he considers alternatives to his lack of privacy. He can choose between landscaping the entire yard and hope the growth rate is rapid, or he could have a fence put up and get the privacy he's looking for. Putting up the fence will mean more to him than just a barrier between his neighbor's yard and his own. It is also a symbol of wealth and security; not only is he wealthy enough to afford the fencing (which can be very expensive), but he has created a personal, secure environment within which he and his family can play and entertain their friends, with the privacy they have longed for. The fence may keep out neighboring dogs, cats and people, but that is only a secondary benefit compared to the feeling of privacy and the statement of wealth and security being projected.

Consider also the deficits, those things which make the product unattractive and may be 'problems' to the consumer and prevent him from purchasing. In the case of the fencing, the major deficits are (1) cost, (2) fence may look awkward and out of place, and (3) a fear that putting up the fence may offend neighbors. Keep the deficits in mind because it is often possible to dispell deficits through benefit projection.

Now, with benefits in mind, conjure up the emotions and feelings that the consumer will feel with the new fence enclosing his yard . . . privacy, secrecy, security, free to do and act as he pleases, freedom from nosy neighbors. All these feelings should be giving you cues which can be used in execution to transmit the benefits. Whenever you make a benefit offering in a message, you must show evidence to support the benefit. Visualize the consumer in his environment and identify the cues which can be used as evidence of the benefit statement. Imagine the following picture:

A hot, sunny summer day, three backyards set side by side. Family in the first yard are grilling hamburgers with the neighbor's dog standing close by, watching intently. The neighbors in the next yard are gardening and sunbathing and also closely watching the action in the first yard. Yard number three is surrounded by a handsome new fence. Inside the family is entertaining and the party is going great; people are laughing, sunbathing, eating and generally having fun, privately.

Evidence can be in the form of factual verbal information or in pictures. Whichever way it is presented, it is necessary to create believability.

One last word about the importance of benefit offering and message effectiveness. Without a benefit to offer the consumer, you will have little chance of interesting him in what you are saying, let alone evoking the desired response from him. People are interested in themselves and to get them to listen to what you are saying, you must say something that is relevant and meaningful to them. Think of offering benefits and designing advertising messages in terms of dealing with someone you know personally. For example:

You are an exhausted parent whose child is demanding attention. Knowing your child and his likes and dislikes, you offer an alternative (benefit) to bothering you, one which you know he will accept and which will alter his behavior. You may choose facial expressions, gestures, and words which will emphasize and enhance the benefit. "Leave me alone to read now, and later I will take you to get ice cream!

Keep in mind that benefits do not always lie on the surface;

they are often wants and motivations to which many people would never openly admit. Every product has a benefit that is of value to someone; the key to message effectiveness is making the right promise to the right audience.

### III. Consumer Profile

Consumer data is gathered through research and organized with the help of the exemplified outline below. The profile gives insight into consumer location, consumer opinions, needs, and desires, both conscious and unconscious. The organization of this kind of information makes message design an easier; more rational decision-making process. The outline exemplified below will provide information about the consumer that will make message design more individualized, personal and relevant.

#### Consumer Profile Outline:

Geographics: Location of consumer, usually broken down into regions, states, and cities or towns, sometimes including zip codes.

Demographics: Statistical information about the consumer including age, sex, marital status, education, family size, income, race and religion. This bracket helps to define exactly who has the buying power, and how much buying power there is.

Psychographics: Psychographics defines the consumer's lifestyle, opinions, attitudes, beliefs,

motivations, conscious and subconscious drives. Psychographics details consumer personality traits, making it easier to tailor messages to the individual consumer.

Consuming Behaviors: This details the consumer use of the product or product class, when, where and how often it is purchased and how the product is used.

Media Behaviors: defines the consumer's regular viewing and readership habits; which magazines and newspapers the consumer reads, how often, television and radio viewing and listening habits and when, where, and with whom.

These categories should give you some essential information which will make the follow-up execution steps easier.

At this stage of the copy platform, having completed personality profiling and information compilation concerning the consumer, you should be ready to make some decisions concerning execution, creating the physical advertisement. You should now be facing execution with the benefit selection made, and with an understanding of the consumer-product relationship. The most difficult step for many people because it involves making personal, subjective decisions based on the data accumulated.

#### IV. Creative Tactics

Creative tactics refers to a variety of execution decisions which will carry the idea into final communication--the physical advertisement. The process is creative because it deals with combining materials and making something of value to someone . . . a message containing information or good news . . . something of interest . . . or something of amusement. This decision-making process involves visualization in a narrower sense than previously mentioned, in the final selection, modification, and arrangement of elements. Raw materials or units which you will be dealing with in execution are communication tools which you will manipulate, alter, edit, design and coordinate to tell the product story. The units or elements used in execution include such things as: copy, photographs, illustrations, headlines, logo designs and other particulars.

These units should be regarded as individual 'products' of the strategy and copy platform because each unit must be developed according to the plan and direction set for them. While each individual unit will be developed singularly, their purpose is to become unified in communicating the message. These units are categorized into copy and visuals.

Copy and visuals, or communication graphics as they are sometimes called, must work in unison,

complementing one another to make an effective statement, transmit a mood, and evoke a consumer reaction. The following definitions refer to these communication units, their creation, selection and development as individual elements which will become unified into one message.

### Copy

The term 'copy' has many meanings in message design, sometimes used to refer to text or body copy, other times referring to headlines or to the entire message. The function of copy is to convey ideas by means of words. Copy means words, audio or printed. John W. Crawford divides the function of copywriting into two parts:

(1) "A never-ending search for ideas," and (2) "A never-ending search for new and meaningful ways to express those ideas."<sup>1</sup> 'Copy' is the process of seeking out ideas and determining how to best express them in words, pictures, gestures, tones, and sounds. Visualization is used in copy development to bridge the idea to the visual or graphic representation of that idea.

Copy and copywriting will be dealt with more thoroughly in the following chapter. At this point, it is important to think of copy as a communication tool which will be used to carry the idea or benefit through to final execution.

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<sup>1</sup>John W. Crawford, Advertising, 2nd edition, Boston, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1965, p. 173.

## Graphics or Visuals

Graphics and visuals are any written, drawn, engraved or expressed ideas that visually clarify the benefit and makes it more vivid. Graphic elements used in constructing an ad are referred to as artwork, illustrations, designs, photographs, set designs, logo designs and typography. Arthur Turnbull says of graphics in communication:

Without attempting to put a relative value on illustration as compared to words, we can still be aware of the special effectiveness of images in accomplishing communication goals. The pervasiveness of images in our communication system is without question; we start to learn our verbal language from picture books and move on to maturity in a world of television, motion pictures, illustrated magazines and books, and newspapers.<sup>2</sup>

The following chapter discusses the execution phase of the message design process and the theories that influence execution effectiveness. These theories include design theories and principles, line theory; involving mood, tones, shapes and emotional impact of line meaning, and the function of symbolism in the message. The theories deal with aspects of execution which will directly affect the way your message is perceived, consciously and unconsciously.

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<sup>2</sup>Arthur T. Turnbull, Russell N. Baird, The Graphics of Communication, third edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas, London, 1975.



## CHAPTER THREE

### EXECUTION DECISIONS

Chapter three deals with execution decisions. With direction set and information provided by the copy platform, you are ready to make some basic execution decisions. These decisions include the message approach; visual and verbal element selection for headlines and illustrations; copy; casting of characters; set design, and other decisions related to communication of the message. The chapter begins by discussing execution and design principles that will affect any message design, including line theory, symbolism and individual 'unit or element' considerations.

#### Execution

Execution is the final stage of message design. It consists of taking the elements copy and visuals, and arranging them in a pleasing, effective design. Execution begins where visualization leaves off, it is a continuation of visualization, carrying the image into physical form. Leo Burnett speaks of execution:

A successful advertisement, like a successful contract, depends on a meeting of the minds. It cannot be written to please ourselves. To change advertisements is cheaper than to change human nature. The successful advertiser knows human nature and sets it to work for him.<sup>1</sup>

In execution, Leo Burnett suggests the following goals for effective advertising:

1. Emotionalize--offer the consumer something in terms of one of the two basic laws of human nature; self preservation and self enhancement. "Don't tell people how good you make goods, tell them how good your goods make them."
2. Rationalize--give the consumer an excuse to buy.
3. The appeal should be properly timed in relation to economic and social trends and current interests.
4. Every message should be in good taste and the benefit should be clear.

The benefits which you are offering the consumer must be unmistakably clear. Bold picture of the package and product, plus visualization of the benefit will never do any harm if the message as a whole is engaging enough.

5. Tell as much of the story as possible in pictures. "Tests prove that they are six times as easy to

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<sup>1</sup>Leo Burnett, "A Check-List For A Successful Advertisement," (Personal Views), Advertising's Role in Society, Wright.

recognize as words--half again as easy to recall."<sup>2</sup>

Gaining and holding attention in advertising is not merely a matter of mechanical devices. People are highly selective in the ways in which they give their attention to things around them. There is probably no stronger influence on people's attention than their own predispositions. Some execution characteristics are identified by William Bernbach. Bernbach doesn't talk down to the audience, the audience is respected. The copy is honest, the message demands attention and has something to say. The approach is clean and direct. Bernbach states, "You must be as simple and as swift and as penetrating as possible . . . what you must do, by the most economical and creative means possible is attract people and sell them."<sup>3</sup> Robert Find, copywriter at Bernbach, states,

We recognize that an advertisement is an intrusion. People don't necessarily like advertisements, and avoid them if possible. Therefore, to do a good advertisement you're obligated to reward the reader for his time and patience in allowing you to interrupt. Advertising pushes its way into people's<sup>4</sup> minds, so entertainment is a sort of repayment.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Otto Kleppner, Advertising Procedure (4th edition), (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1950).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Execution calls for designing capabilities, both in a psychological and physical sense. The following theories may have an influence on the execution decisions you will be making. They include; physical design theory, line theory, symbolism theory and others related to the individual execution elements such as headline, illustration and copy.

### Execution Theories

#### Design Theory

Design is basic to almost every activity performed and is defined as "a purposeful plan of action." Any creative design, whether an advertising message or a painting, is both functional and expressive. Design principles applied to execution is planned structure. Ivan Chermayeff of Chermayeff & Geismar Associates says,

Whenever we do something for a definite reason, we are designing. Designing comes from a combination of intelligence and artistic ability. Designing means creative action that fulfills it's purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Art museum director, Wallace S. Baldinger describes the process of design:

When the artist designs, he practices no magic hocus-pocus. He simply performs on a more exacting and complicated level an act in which the rest of us engage every day. We design actually when we plan anything. We arrange and order it. We design when we set a table for

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<sup>1</sup>Quote: Upper and Lower Case, The International Journal of Typographics, published by International Type-face Corporation, Vol. 5, No. 1, March 1978, p. 5.

dinner. Instead of tossing the silverware about haphazardly, we arrange the scheme every time we change the type of meal to be served. We design when we take notes in class, ordering every page much as a layout artist designs every page of a book to be published. The artist's job is simply more difficult, less conventional, more exploratory, less charted and familiar.<sup>2</sup>

It is much the same for you in the design of messages, with the selection and arrangement of elements following a set of principles subjectively selected. To ensure message effectiveness in regard to physical design, the advertisement must follow some basic design principles which include balance, proportion, unity and emphasis, among others. In the selection and ordering of message elements, there should be a strong sense of order. Order is the overriding consideration for the physical layout because it simplifies the message. The designer's function, according to Phillip C. Beam, is,

. . . to create an arrangement in any art work which will satisfy the human need for both order and variety in a world that is profuse and confusing on the one hand, and monotonous and boring on the other.<sup>3</sup>

Not all designers agree on what principles are of top priority in advertising message design, but the following list can be considered widely inclusive:

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<sup>2</sup>Wallace S. Baldinger, The Visual Arts (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 28.

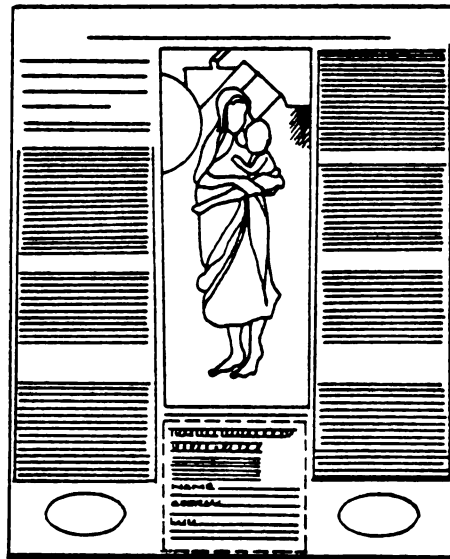
<sup>3</sup>Roy Paul Nelson, The Design of Advertising, third edition (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown, Co., 1978).

1. Every advertisement must have balance.
2. The space within the advertisement should be broken up into pleasing proportions.
3. A directional pattern should be evident.
4. A unifying force should hold an ad together.
5. One element should dominate all others.

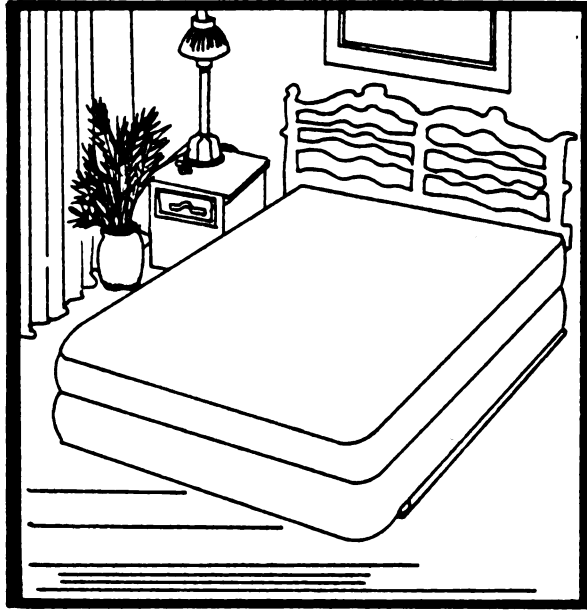
In summary, the design principles which apply to the physical design of the advertisement are: balance, proportion, unity, sequence and emphasis. These principles are further described in the following:

### Balance

Balance in layout (layout referring to the physical design of the message) refers to the positioning and size of elements: copy, illustration, headline, and other elements within the advertisement. There are two kinds of balance: formal or symmetrical and informal or asymmetrical. In formal balance, items are positioned on both sides of an ad. This type of layout is used for a feeling of dignity, formality.



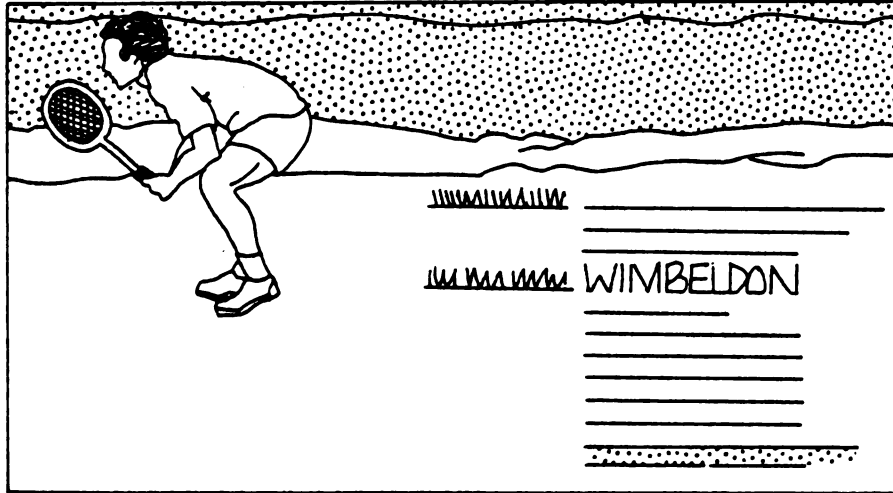
Informal balance means the distribution of weight is unequal, which can add interest and variety. While it is not easy to achieve an asymmetrical layout which looks natural, once achieved, it can really attract attention. While balance within the layout is important, it should not restrict you as a designer. Some examples of informal balance:



### Proportion

Proportion in ad design is the relationship of sizes, the width of an element to the depth of that element, and the amount of space here to the amount of space there. Proportion also involves the color and tone within the ad, the amount of light area as opposed to the amount of dark area, the amount of color in relation to noncolor areas. Ideally these relationships vary and create a visually interesting layout. To achieve eye pleasing proportions, the total space should be arranged so that the

eye does not perceive obvious mathematical relationships, but rather be drawn to an intended area of interest.



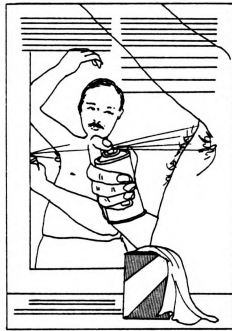
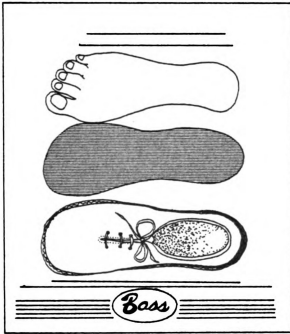
### Sequence

Sequence involves positioning the element for easy, logical, sequential reading. It is taking the reader by the hand and leading him through the ad. To control sequence, you can either place items in a pattern normal to eye flow, right to left, or you can try an alternative element arrangement, clearly marked for eye flow. The eye moves naturally from big elements to small, from black to lighter elements, from color to noncolor, from unusual to usual shapes.<sup>4</sup>

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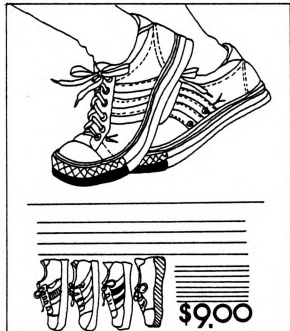
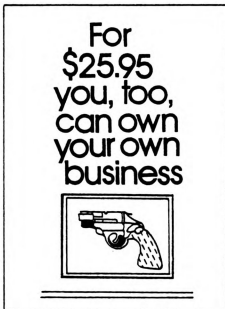
<sup>4</sup>Roy Paul Nelson, The Design of Advertising, third edition (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1978).





### Unity

Unity is the most important of design principles because it serves to pull the elements of the ad together. Harmony and unity are one, and elements such as borders, element positioning, color placement and juxtapositioning of white space will bring unity to the layout. To create emphasis, place the emphasized element in a position which will dominate and attract attention.



George Giusti tells how he puts design principles to work: "By eliminating details, I achieve impact. By using fewer colors, I attain more contrast. By simplifying shapes, I make them bolder."<sup>5</sup> The application of the mentioned design principles varies with each ad and each individual situation. One principle may be more applicable than another, depending upon the mood and purpose of the ad. While there are many alternatives to ad layout and arrangement, there is never a totally correct solution to any design problem. To test for a good layout, once the ad has been designed, see if one element can be removed without disturbing harmony and balance. If the ad isn't hurt by the loss of an element, the ad is in trouble, and needs to be redesigned so that each element is of importance and value.

### Line Theory

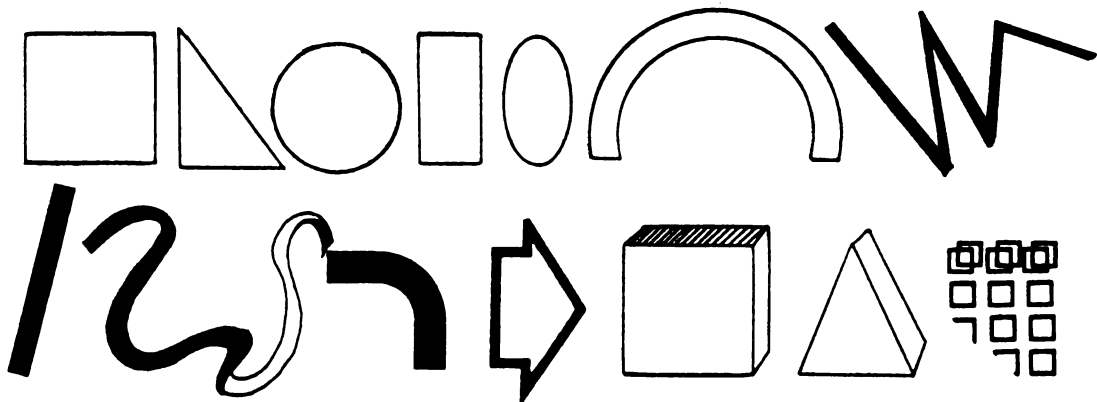
Execution deals with the arrangement of elements, headlines, illustrations, copy, photographs and logo designs, all of which have shape. Line is the basic element you work with in message design, and when you change the line's direction, you begin to define a shape. Shape is line with a second dimension. When you put shape into perspective and add thickness, you give it form

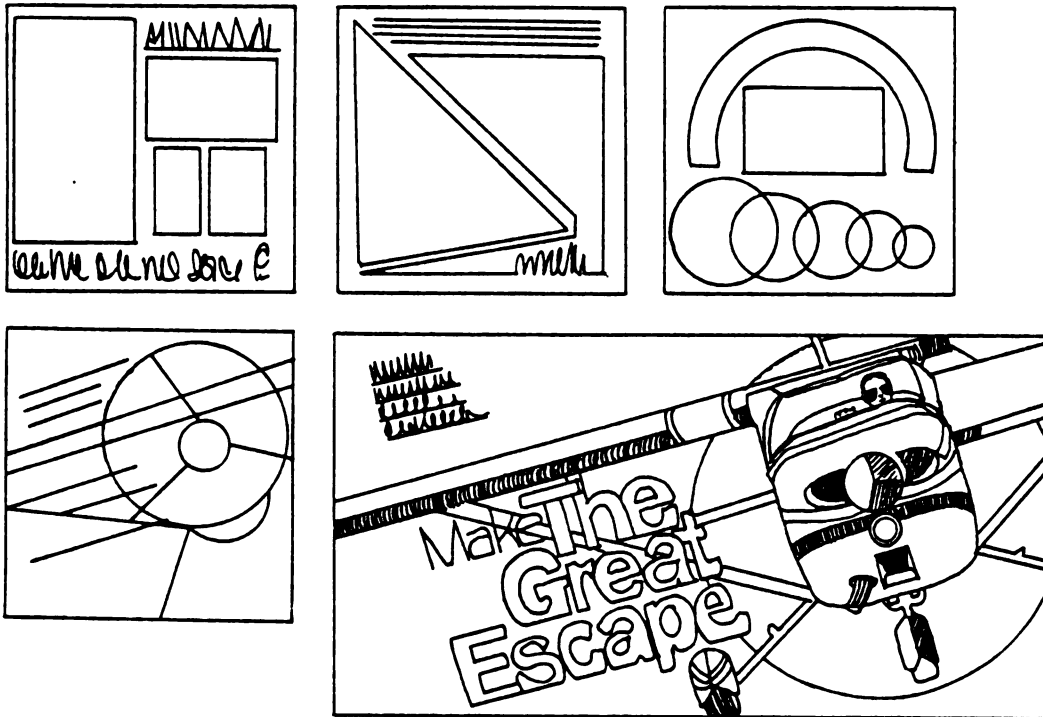
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<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Mary Anne Guitar's, 22 Famous Illustrators Tell How They Work (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1964), p. 108.

and create the illusion of a third dimension. The purpose of understanding line and design theory is to make positioning in layout and arrangement of elements within any type of message design more rational. The arrangement of elements in the advertisement is as important as what you are saying. Verbal and visual elements must work together to achieve total message effectiveness.

Line is the basic element of the advertisement. There are five kinds of lines: curved, spiral, meandering, zigzag, and straight. You can use lines to portray the three classic shapes in art: the triangle, the rectangle, (or square), and the circle. Each of these suggests various other shapes to be made from the classic three. By combining classic shapes, you come up with a variety of other shapes, and by adding a third dimension, you can create the shape of anything. Combination and association of these shapes within a defined shape will give you the beginning elements of designing the physical layout of an advertisement.





### Mood in Line

Lines suggest mood, and even the suggestion of line suggests mood. When placed into an advertising context, the lines take on meaning. Straight lines suggest strength, direction, opposition and dominance. Curved lines suggest grace, movement, and development. Lines convey the moods they do because they are abstractions of objects and figures that originate the moods.<sup>6</sup> Lines can be real as well as imaginary, real enough to be used to delineate shape, as in a line drawing or in figures or a letter of the alphabet. Words and sentences in themselves form lines. The real or imagined line shows direction and movement.

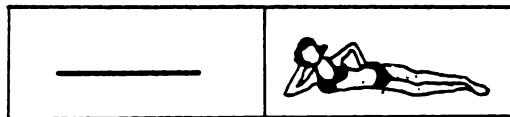
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<sup>6</sup> Arthur T. Turnbull, Russel N. Baird, The Graphics of Communication, third edition, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, Chicago, 1975.

The position of elements, headline, copy, typography and illustrations create imaginary lines which can be effectively used to lead the eye through an advertisement. Real lines can accomplish the same thing. Taking advantage of the fact that the eye moves left to right and top to bottom, the various elements could be so placed as to be seen in a certain order.

Optical illusions can be used to your advantage in ad design, as seen in the following examples:

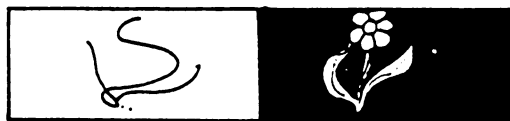
1. A horizontal line is easier to see than a vertical line. This is because the eye moves naturally horizontally, recording what it sees easily.



2. Lines or stripes running in a single direction tend to lengthen that direction.



3. A filling-in of a shape in the tone or color or with elements tend to reduce the size of the shape.



4. What is nearby or surrounding a figure influences its apparent size.



### The Emotional Impact of Letter Shapes

According to researcher David W. Seaman, we often dismiss letters as mere building blocks for words, but each letter is a picture, a symbol that blends with sounds letters represent and the meanings of the words letters form to subtly affect our attitudes. Use the letter X for example:

X means skulls and crossbones, crossed swords. Compare the difference between the corporate name ESSO--with its curving, friendly, almost humble double S--and the EXXON the company became. "That company is not humble any more," says Seaman, referring to the message conveyed in the logo change. "It's going somewhere, grabbing something."<sup>7</sup>

Semiotics is the study of symbols, including letters, which have their origin in pictures. Meanings of grouped letters became more important than the letters themselves and people mostly ignored the medium in pursuit of the message. Besides letter shapes, typefaces affect our attitudes toward messages in print. "Poetry and advertising are closer together than many would like to admit;

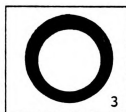
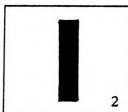
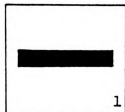
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<sup>7</sup> Rick Ratliff, "The Emotional Impact of Letter Shapes," article in The Detroit Free Press, February 24, 1978, p. 1C.

both poets and advertisers try to foster mental impressions that transcend the obvious."<sup>8</sup> Such things as letter shapes and typeface symbolism should not have obvious impact, but should work in subtle ways, transmitting mood and emotion. Below are examples of letters and their meanings.



Line configurations and directions have strong symbolic meaning, below are some examples:<sup>9</sup>



1. rest, tranquility
2. growth, life, strength
3. continuous movement
4. contrast, bold, striking
5. contrasting shapes, showing forcefulness

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> F. H. Willis, Fundamentals of Layout (New York: Sterling Publishing Company, 1965), p. 56.

### Tone and Texture

While line is used to create shape and mood, if it were not for tone, we would see nothing. Tone refers to relative lightness or darkness. Only by this contrast can lines, weight and textures be visualized. Any surface structure can be sensed visually as having texture. Texture involves the reader, making him want to touch as well as look at an interesting picture. Moisture on fruit makes it look appetizing. Texture enhances the benefit. Variation in line can come from the artist's pen or from the printer's application of screens which can create and change tone and texture, as shown in examples below.

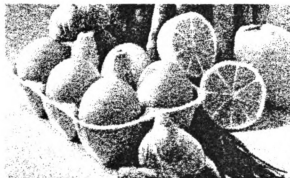
#### **SPECIAL LINE SCREENS**



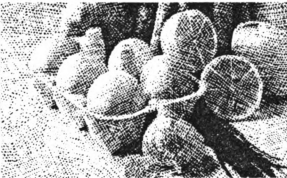
STRAIGHT LINE



DRY BRUSH



MEZZO TINT



RANDOM LINE



### Making Designs Articulate

Structural relationships in the layout should be accomodated to (1) the sequence of eye movements and (2) the order of absorbing the information the message contains. Content transmission is the prime function of design. The reader tends to scan the total layout for an over-all impression of the advertisement. After that, assuming points of attraction engender interest, he may devote some time to details. It is important to consider the eye-movements of the reader as he scans a page, a spread of pages, or an ad. These tendencies have been revealed through lab experiments using the eye camera, with the following conclusions:

1. The eye tends, after leaving the initial fixation, to move to the left and upward.
2. The exploratory coverage of the space is from this point in a clockwise direction.
3. The eye prefers horizontal movement.
4. The left position is preferred to the right and the top position is preferred to the bottom.<sup>10</sup>

While these bits of information are oversimplified, the purpose is to make you as a designer consider the nature of the proposition and the reader's interests before beginning designing.

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<sup>10</sup>Arthur T. Turnbull, Russel N. Baird, The Graphics of Communication, third edition (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975).

Associating elements and creating unity can be done with real and imaginary lines. There are several other techniques available to do the same thing, they include: similar shapes and tones, similar sizes, similar textures, and enclosure with borders and color positioning. To achieve a different effect, to indicate differentiation, make the elements mentioned above, unsimilar shapes, tones, sizes and textures.

### Symbolism in Message Design

A symbol is an expression of an idea. As pointed out by Langer, the symbol-making function is one of man's primary activities. It does on all the time because it is a fundamental mental process. Symbolism gives meaning to experiences, understanding of surroundings, and makes a connection in the mind with a lasting picture image.

As all human communication involves symbols, whether words, pictures, signs or gestures, the message creator must use the best symbolic tools available to do the job.<sup>11</sup>

Through the use of symbols, the mind retains ideas and images in the memory, and can recall and transmit those ideas to others. The symbols are vehicles of thought.<sup>12</sup>

Man lives in an environment of symbols. According to

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<sup>11</sup>John Caples, Making Ads Pay (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966).

<sup>12</sup>Pierre Martineau, Motivation in Advertising (McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc.).

Martineau, communication is the act of conveying meaning to others because the verbal language is inadequate to express man's emotional nature. There are many areas where the precise meanings and definitions have to be conveyed by nonverbal, nonrational symbols. Martineau defines a symbol as anything which stands for something else.<sup>13</sup>

In all forms of symbolic expression the meaning is taken in all at once. The meaning of a symbol comes across in a simultaneous impression of the parts, when viewing a movie, experiencing a play, viewing a painting, reading a novel, some alterations below the threshold of conscious awareness form the various nonverbal symbols in advertising. "Advertising combines the force of both logical thought and emotive, esthetic thought."<sup>14</sup>

Besides expressing logical thought, words, the strategic and tactical decisions made concerning the message will uncontrollably indicate and reflect emotions, attitudes, moods and intentions. One level is that sent out by thought content. The other is the level where intuition operates. In written language, attitudes such as warmth and forcefulness have to be expressed differently than in conversation. Metaphor, image, underlining

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Steward Henderson Britt, "How Advertising Can Use Psychology's of Learning," Printer's Ind, V. 252, September 1955, p. 74, 77.

meaning and tone in writing are the symbols which the reader looks for rather than gestures or tones of voice. Since advertising also utilizes art, layout and music and live personalities of announcers, each develops symbolic meaning.

Facial expressions, gestures, body postures, tone of voice, use of color and method of presentation (approach) are all symbolic messages that can communicate with more accuracy and force than spoken words. Because symbols are often far more expressive and far more believable than language, you have to use nonverbal levels of communication to convey many informational messages and meanings. The process of creating in this area of symbolism is entirely different from the technical, mathematical and analytical approach to problem solving. There are two modes of thinking which are equally powerful but very different--scientific thinking and creative imagination. The habit of attaching meanings, attitudes, feelings, even moods to inanimate objects is a mental process of symbolization. Creating effective messages involves selecting symbols which will translate benefits and ideas. As your consumer audience becomes narrower, fewer people will share the same meanings for given symbols. This may suggest that interpersonal meanings are less relevant in any given advertising situation where you want to create an impression that the audience numbers one.

Fundamentally, advertising uses the laws of attention and association. The dramatization of benefits is a process in which the consumer associates suggested imagery with product use. Psychologists state that the main appeal which advertising uses, and the one which holds main reliance, is the emotional, in the sense that advertising creates suggested association with strong motive power. Benefits originate in the mind of the consumer. Benefits are what the consumer makes them. It is only through suggestion and symbolic imagery that advertising works to create a connection between the product and the benefits. The point is that humans unconsciously but instinctively look for these nonverbal symbols as clues to the real meaning of what's going on, to the real identification of the product, its benefits, the motive behind the communication, intentional symbolic transactions that occur among people. Visual symbols are highly significant carriers of meaning in any advertising message. In solving the problem of how to get through to the consumer, the visual symbols communicate faster and much more accurately than an involved use of words. When symbols and pictures are used, as opposed to straight verbiage or copy, the result is less effort on the part of the consumer. There is no work, no effort exerted on the part of the consumer. Martineau states that a picture is a free gift; there is no challenge and no threat to the viewer. Words

can't communicate anything unless they can create images in the mind. In many messages, it is the extra gesture, tone of voice, picture, or other symbol that will transmit the benefit.

Symbolism can be thought of as a vehicle for the benefit. Symbolism is in the form of copy, illustration, headline, typefaces and other message elements. The key to making the correct selection, one that will be identifiable to the individual consumer is an understanding of his language of 'symbolic references' and subconscious needs and using them in communication.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ELEMENT SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN EXECUTION

This chapter deals with final execution, the selection and development of individual message elements or units such as headlines, copy, illustrations and type styles, use of color, logo designs and layout techniques. Final execution begins with selection and design of an approach and decisions that follow will be influenced by the approach. The approach should be single-minded and created with the long-range advertising strategy in mind. The final arrangement of the elements should result in an effective, visually pleasing design, meaning all design principles should be employed in the physical arrangement. The arrangement of these elements is called 'layout,' with varying formats and techniques to be suggested for effective ad design. The chapter will cover the aspects of approach selection and its influence on element selection and development. Also, element development processes will be discussed, such as, how effective copy is achieved, points to consider when selecting type, which is more effective; art or photography, what makes a headline

strong and which arrangements in layout are the most pleasing and effective. Other chapter inclusions are art and illustration development, relevancy and logic of art (photography included) and the physical development of the ad from concept to final preparation for printing.

Today's advertising has to be a combination of verbal and visual elements to be effective. The balance of words and pictures has evolved to become picture dominant because pictures can tell a story at a glance, if chosen correctly and positioned with a combination of effective elements. Thinking visually, as discussed, means to mentally conceive pictures, headlines and copy which will convey your message. Visualizing the message begins with seeing a picture and the headline, selecting an approach, such as a humorous approach or a nostalgic approach, and executing the combination you see in your mind's eye. There must be some consideration at this point of style and taste. The design of advertising is very much a matter of style and taste. Style is defined as, "distinction, excellence, originality and character in any form of artistic expression." Taste is defined as, "the ability to judge what is beautiful and appropriate."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedia Dictionary, including Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary, The Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, New York, 1967.



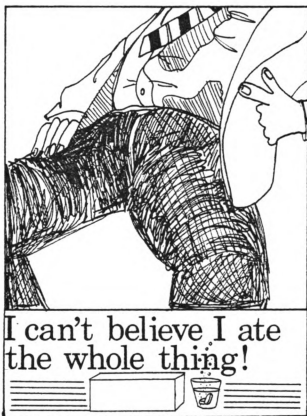
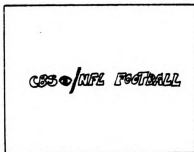
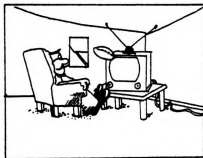
The style and taste of the advertisement is what distinguishes it from other layouts. Style may be formal or informal and much like approach it is a decision which will influence decisions regarding the selection and development of other message elements. Behind style should be the understanding of marketing and selling concepts, writing styles and characteristics of different techniques and the understanding of the physical, the rendering of the idea in execution, which elements will be most appealing. A combination of all these directions will give the decision of style and approach more positive results. It is assumed that in an actual advertising situation, the advertising decisions being considered will be made and carried out by professionals within the agency ranks. But, for the purpose of this thesis, it is assumed that the entire message design process will be done by you, from concept development to final art and execution. The following deals with approach, the definition, function and influence approach has on the entire message design process.

### Approach

The first decision in execution is approach. Approach is defined in Webster's New World Dictionary as: ". . . to bring near, a way of coming toward or reaching a person or place; access." In advertising, "approach"

refers to a combination of things . . . mood, style and feeling projected in a message. Selecting the approach your message will take will be determined by the type of product, the benefit being offered, the medium through which it is being transmitted, the cultural and environmental setting, and most importantly, the consumer who will be receiving the message. Examples of approach include: nostalgic, straight-forward, testimonial, dramatization, humorous, informational, and alarming. You may select a humorous approach because it is appropriate for your product, which may be bubble gum, a new cereal or air freshener. Approach determines direction for the rest of the decisions involved in execution, affecting headline, illustration, copy formation and type selection. It is important because it has impact on every aspect of execution from this point on. Approach is the tie-in for the whole message, the face or costume the message wears to best tell the story.

The humorous approach can take many forms, as seen in examples one and two, from the animated television commercial for CBS NFL Football, to the real-life situation comedy such as Alka Seltzer's unsuccessful, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing" campaign. In both cases, humor is used to amuse, entertain and sell. But, in warning, humor as a message approach should not be blatant,



but rather subtle and low key. It can be effectively used to differentiate the product from others in the market and generate product memorability when used in an appropriate context. In the wrong context humor can backfire, entertain too much so that the joke is remembered and the product forgotten.

Another type of approach exemplified in three and four is nostalgic. In both cases the product and benefit are best communicated when put in a memorable setting. Bell Telephone's "LONG DISTANCE IS THE NEXT THING TO BEING THERE" campaign is an example of an nostalgic approach.





Considerations to be made when selecting approach include, tone, style, mood, setting, characterization of personalities chosen as spokesman. These elements are important ingredients in giving the message a style, a definite direction, and a feeling which will create a memorable image in the consumer's mind.

Setting a mood and creating a product environment is very important in making the message memorable. The setting of a mood is a matter of type and illustration selection which transmit a chosen feeling, writing copy which stimulates chosen emotions in the consumer and tying it all into an effective 'package'. Tone becomes an ingredient transmitted through mood. It may be the kind of voice your spokesman uses in his address, or it may be in the style of his clothing or personality characteristics he has.

When you have your message in visualized form, look closely at your elements, to see how clearly the setting, the character, including the facial expressions and hand movements as he speaks. These small elements should work together to make a single, unified statement, reflecting the quality of the benefit, and believability of what is being said.

No small ingredient should be left untouched in message design--consider every angle of your message, and what each element looks like alone. For example, if you

have selected a man as spokesman for your product, Bufferin, it will make a big difference if he wears a sports coat, a T-shirt or a white lab coat. His credibility and the message effectiveness will be influenced by what he wears, the way he speaks, the tone of his voice and selection of words. Choice of words will affect his believability. If he is an average guy extolling the benefits of Bufferin, his believability and credibility will be different than if he is posing as a physician. The decisions hinge on product/benefit type and the consumer targeted. There is a wide range of approach possibilities, each dictating decisions that will function to finish painting the picture. When you have made your approach decision and begin selecting 'clues' to complete the total message image--look at the message as a whole for impact value, then subtract individual elements to test their contribution and weigh their value. If they don't contribute, they are detracting from your message. Throw them out. Examples of these 'elements' or 'clues' include size of photo, content, is it all necessary (?), spokesman's expression, would it be better as something else, etc. Work, rework and unwork your message until every element works together harmoniously in approach.

### Headlines

Surveys taken by Gallup-Robinson readership research indicate that four out of five people do not read beyond the headline of an ad. This is strong evidence that it's what's up front that counts. Many consider the headline to be the most important aspect of the message. The function of a headline is to grab the reader and entice him to read on. It is often the only part of the ad that is read and the main concept must be up front in plain English. The headline is the place to shout benefits, point out product advantages and motivate the consumer to read on. The headline does not summarize copy, but serves as a lead in to copy. If you ask a question in the headline, the first line of copy should answer it. Headlines don't have to be complete sentences. Mail order specialist, Vic Schwab says that the headline must do two things: (1) select an interested audience, and (2) promise them a worthwhile reward for reading.<sup>2</sup>

In most cases, headlines cannot be grouped and categorized and are situationally determined. It makes more sense to write what seems natural and to say what needs to be told logically than to set out to write a

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<sup>2</sup>Victor C. Schwab, How To Write A Good Advertisement (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1962).



categoric 'emotional' headline. John Caples is quoted as saying that by far the most effective headline is that which appeals to the reader's self interest. Theoretically, the reader will be interested enough by what you have teased him with in the headline to read on. John Caples further suggests that you follow up the headline benefit with the assurance or evidence of its truth in a way that is believable.<sup>3</sup> Just as the right headline can make a difference in readership, a right word and combination of words can make a difference in consumer reaction. Word selection should be a logical decision-making process, based on product benefit information and knowledge about the consumer's position.

Categorically, there are types of headlines which can be labeled and are known to be effective in varying and applicable situations:

Question headline: "HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU  
SUFFERED IN THE 90° HEAT?"

Challenge headline: "IF YOU CAN BUY A MORE FUEL  
EFFICIENT CAR THAN VOLKSWAGON,  
BUY IT."

How-to headline: "HOW TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR FOOD  
DOLLAR."

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<sup>3</sup>John Caples, Making Ads Pay (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966).

Curiosity or teaser headline: "JACK SPEK MADE  
\$24,000 LAST MONTH STEALING  
FROM PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND I."

News headline: "SCIENTISTS PROVE BAYER IS BETTER  
THAN ANACIN."

Emotional headline: "NO GOOD NIGHT KISS FOR  
CHARLIE."

Direct benefit headline: a combination of news,  
directive and emotional appeal, direct benefit is  
the most effective because it calls out and  
selects the reader and states its offer up front:  
"COFFEE LOVERS: SAVE \$2.00 ON THE NEXT POUND OF  
MAXWELL HOUSE COFFEE YOU BUY."

These are only a sampling of the types, styles  
and approaches headlines can take. Headline writing  
varies a great deal with the types of markets and types  
of media. The same principles do not apply in one medium  
the same as they do in another. In every aspect of head-  
line writing there is a need to write clearly and state  
facts, whether the approach involves direct or indirect  
selling. A direct-selling headline uses one or more of  
the primary product benefits in no uncertain terms. The  
benefit is up front . . . use this product and you will  
get this benefit. Indirect-selling headlines make a more  
subtle attempt to inform and sell, often playing on the

emotional and attention-getting aspects of the product rather than the benefit itself. Selection of the type of headline you will use will depend upon the product, the benefit and the consumer situation. Indirect-selling headlines, emotional and soft-sell, are often used when the benefit is intangible, involving conscious and unconscious consumer needs, fears, and desires. Headlines seen in Dial soap advertisements never say, "BODY ODOR STINKS; USE DIAL." Instead, there is a subtle combination of symbols and clues used in the total ad package, including illustration showing Dial soap surrounded in bubbles, a happy, fresh looking person beginning her day, and a headline which sends out the subtly stated benefit, "YOU USE DIAL, DON'T YOU WISH EVERYONE DID?" In this case, the headline depends on visual impact for support.

There are many other headline categories in the literature which suggest that headline writing is made easier type casting. Some examples include: directive, "DO SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL TODAY, GIVE A GIFT OF DIAMONDS."

Gimmick and curiosity headlines: "6 MONTHS OF MARRIAGE AND NOW THIS . . ."

"THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOR."

Hornblowing: "WE'RE NUMBER ONE IN CAR SALES."

"NOBODY CAN BEAT ARMOUR FOR QUALITY."

These are only examples of types of headlines, these types should not restrict your imagination and creativity, but should be used impetus for more effective headline writing.

Whatever type of headline you decide upon for a given advertising problem, long or short, it must answer to three criteria necessary in making the headline and the entire message effective: the content has to be right, meaning that it must contain information relevant to the situation, the product and consumer. The approach has to be right, the headline has to tie in with all other elements in the message, the approach has to be unified and clear. The execution has to achieve the stated objective; it must serve to communicate, to attract attention, persuade, influence or motivate consumers.

### Copy

Copy consists of type paragraphs which run in columns or blocks, referred to as copy blocks. It is usually set in smaller type than the headline. Effectively written copy helps to convince, persuade, influence and motivate the consumer, and it closes the sale. Copy length has long been debated, with many practitioners saying that the longer and more explicit the copy, the better, and others claiming that shorter copy is more effective. Whatever the argument, the logical approach seems to be that copy should be as long as it needs to be to tell the story adequately, regardless of length.

Copywriting is no easy task, but the assignment can be made more pleasant if you follow a basic outline, keep consumer and message objective out front, and write with an open mind. Once you have the concept visualized, and once the headline and subheads are written, the rest of the copywriting should come naturally. Body copy stems directly from the headline, flowing from and explaining or continuing a story started by the headline. Like the headline, and all other elements within the advertisement, the copy must answer to three criteria in order to be effective. Those criteria are:

Content: the content has to be right, it must be relevant to the situation, to the product and consumer.

Approach: The approach has to be right, it must follow the format decided upon, it must tie in with all other message elements, unified and clear.

Execution: The execution must follow up message objective, it must sell, influence, persuade, inform or motivate, depending on the situation.

Body copy must be of the same approach and content as the headline. It should flow from the headline, and not go off in an unrelated direction. It must be unified and clear, explaining the visual and benefit are so attractive, often giving supporting evidence for what is offered in the headline. Think of it like this: the headline and visual gets attention and offers a tempting benefit and the copy

fills in the details. It is better to be single-minded in writing copy because the consumer may become confused if too many ideas are introduced. Just as it is wise to offer only one primary benefit per message, per headline, it is wise to continue that single theme through the body copy. It is almost impossible to categorize copy. There are different terms for copy--"emotional," "narrative," "direct,"--but these descriptions are not directives. Copy should follow headline in its approach, content and execution. The following checklist was developed by W. Keith Hafer and Gordon E. White, and termed "Crude Creed for Copywriters," it suggests a sequence for developing copy:

Start with a BASIC BENEFIT OR CONCEPT  
 which succeeds in  
 LINKING CONSUMER BENEFIT AND PRODUCT EXCLUSIVE . . .  
 then  
 THINK VISUALLY  
 TALK FRIENDLY  
 KEEP IT SIMPLE  
 PROVE YOUR POINT  
 STAY ON TRACK  
 STRIVE FOR THE UNEXPECTED  
 SEEK A RECURRING THEME  
 BE YOURSELF.<sup>4</sup>

These suggestions apply in general to the writing task. The following suggestions apply to actual writing, selecting and ordering words and meanings which will most effectively communicate your message:

Write clearly: The most important rule for writing any kind of copy is that the consumer understand

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<sup>4</sup>W. Keith Hafer, Gordon E. White, Advertising Writing (New York: West Publishing Co., 1977), p. 88.

it. Use plain language and concrete terms; use uninvolved, short subject-predicate sentences rather than long, complicated ones.

Choose your words carefully: Within legal boundaries, choose words which will reflect good taste and help to sell the product. Weigh each word for its implications. For example: "Sugar free" is a better word than "Sugarless," because 'free' has connotations that are favorable, where "less" has negative ones. The idea in writing copy is to speak to one person and impress that person without antagonizing others.

Write to involve the reader: Write to involve the reader. Make the copy exciting and startling. Reader involvement can be out front, asking questions, demanding attention and reader participation.

Be to-the-point: Copy length is dependent on the job situation. As previously discussed, most writers agree that copy should use the smallest number of words necessary to sell the product effectively. Copy length is an individual decision, depending upon the product, the type of benefit and the consumer receiving the message. For example: the consumer purchasing a big ticket item such as a washer and dryer will want to know everything available about the product and its benefit (and deficits). In this case, long copy is necessary to sell the product.

It is not enough to state a benefit and not follow it up with fact-filled copy. Copy is necessary to differentiate this ad from another. Short or brief copy is more applicable when the benefit is obvious and intangible, and often more effective with subtle suggestions. Long copy is necessary to take the place of the salesman and can be livened up with headlines, subheads, photo inserts, initial letters set in bold face type, effective use of white space and strong visual elements. These items can make long copy look strong and inviting as shown in the examples below. The visual arrangement also serves to make eye flow easier, recognition and reading less work. Grouping copy when it is long makes it less awesome to the reader.

Make reading easy, transitions smooth and natural:

Copy should flow, with no abrupt intrusions. Easy flow doesn't mean beginning sentences with transition words only; transition can come in content. Ideas should move swiftly. Words which are selected carefully should paint visual pictures in the mind of the reader. Write visually for effective impact.

Avoid overused cliches: Nothing turns a reader or listener onto the fact that he is listening to advertising faster than cliches. Some of the most overworked cliches, according to Roy Nelson include: AT LAST, NOW,



AMAZING, FAST-ACTING, FARM-FRESH, IMPROVED, GIANT SIZE, QUICK AND EASY, HURRY, WHILE SUPPLIES LAST, PASSING THE SAVINGS ON TO YOU, DON'T YOU DARE MISS IT, IT'S THAT SIMPLE, AND GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER, to name a few.<sup>5</sup>

These groups of words tend to forewarn the consumer that an advertisement is ahead and to tune out. There is always a better way to make a statement without using a cliché.

Avoid the obvious: If a benefit is already well known, stress a different benefit. Open the consumer's eyes to unseen advantages and surprize him with the unexpected.

Write for the individual consumer: First, know enough about him to speak on a one-to-one basis. Write as if speaking to one individual, tailoring the copy to the vehicle and it's specialized audience. Write only what is relevant and necessary for him to know and to remember. Make the relationship with the reader an intimate one. A good way to develop the feeling of a two person conversation is by writing in the second person, referring to him as you. Don't dwell on product benefits too much, rather develop the relationship between the consumer and product benefits. Remember that at the same time you must be painting a memorable picture in the

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<sup>5</sup>Roy Paul Nelson, The Design of Advertising (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1978).

consumer's mind.<sup>6</sup>

These suggestions are not by any means all inclusive, but they cover basic copywriting. I found many similar 'rules of thumb' and guidelines suggested by academics and practitioners. The following set of seven guidelines is offered by practitioner Irwin Warren, Executive Vice President and Creative Director of Richard K. Manoff, Inc., New York. Of copywriting he states:

Learning to write ads is much like learning to make love: textbooks don't count for much. We give our new writers seven guidelines. (We carefully avoid calling them rules because they aren't).

- Guideline 1. Advertising writers are salesmen, not writers. Theater is an essential part of creating advertising. I must get your attention before I can sell you something.
- Guideline 2. Make the brand interesting, not your advertising. You have failed if people remember the ads and forget the product.
- Guideline 3. Provide information in ads. Facts. Platitudes and generalities are not effective sales tools.
- Guideline 4. You can't force someone to buy a product. Reason with him until he decides he wants to buy. Indirect and soft-sell are often more effective and have much greater impact in motivating consumer action.
- Guideline 5. If you advertise things to eat, you should like food. If you're trying to sell catfood, buy a cat.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Guideline 6. The client is no boob. He is your client. Respect him and expect the client to nitpick. Remember that clients think of themselves as smart people.

Guideline 7. The Middle West is everything west of Montauk. In other words, people are advertising and media wise everywhere so speak to them in these terms.<sup>7</sup>

These guidelines will be of help to you in any writing situation, but to make your copy effective, it must be believable. Believability can come in the form of guarantees and evidence, testimonials, demonstrations and free samples. Character and narrator selection in advertising for television and radio can enhance consumer believability if the narrator is an authority or even an experienced third party. What a third party says about you is more impressive than what you say about yourself.

In the role of copywriter you should know what's going on, with the product, with the consumer and in the marketplace. With all this background information, much of it supplied through research, don't let it stop you from writing copy which is spontaneous, alive and filled with humanistic warmth and emotion. Those are qualities that involve the consumer, touch him and motivate him to buy and participate.

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<sup>7</sup>Irwin Warren, "Seven Guidelines for Helping Train Today's New Copywriters," Advertising Age, December 26, 1977.

Hal Stebbins speaks about putting power into words in the following:

A thought is an idea in transit. Language is not the tool of thought--it is the mechanism with which we think.

Communicate not words but ideas; think in terms of images when you write. A good way to test copy is to question: Is this word a picture? Keep your words moving, jilt adjectives, the simpler the style, the better. Be human, be simple, be specific, be informative, be enthusiastic, be sure you're understood. . .

Copy is lifting the reader from where he is to where you want him. Copy is taking an idea from the back of your head and putting it into the back of someone else's head. Copy is making people behave the way you want them to. Everything that goes into the advertisement--including what is left out--is copy.<sup>8</sup>

Ten point copy strategy--Hal Stebbins

1. Let advertising show what it can do on it's own; avoid do's and don'ts.
2. Cut out the tricks--stick to truth--make it exciting.
3. Listen to experience.
4. Dare to be different.
5. Remove copy crutches.
6. Rely on imagination and invention, your own creative resources and sources.
7. Start writing copy after quitting copying copy.

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<sup>8</sup>Hal Stebbins, Copy Capsules (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1968).

8. Don't insult the intelligence of the public.
9. Put thunder into the message.
10. Believe in the message's content.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding talking to the public:

The reader doesn't buy because you give him reasons why. The reader buys because he wants what you are selling more than the money that it costs. So, first emotionalize, talk wants, talk benefits, then rationalize and show why to buy.

Forget that you're writing for publication. In fact, forget that you're writing, just talk to the reader with simplicity and sincerity. Dignity has its place; but there are times when it is smart to get down on the floor and play marbles with the public. If you know what makes people tick, your copy will tick.<sup>10</sup>

Before you begin to write, find the benefits and facts that will stimulate the specific consumer. Careful selection of vocabulary in message structure is important because it must reach the audience on their level, or the message will go unnoticed. Keep a tight check on the procedure: the biggest problem can be to tell people what you think they should know for their own good. "When you begin to write, have a mental picture of the face, the home, and the bankbook of the person you are talking to. If you can't visualize the person you're talking to and what he or she looks like, you're going to have trouble

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

knowing what words to say and what tone to use."<sup>11</sup>

The following eight points refer to copywriting in general.

1. Make it easy on your reader. Write short sentences.
2. Don't waste words. Say what you have to--nothing more. Don't pad or skimp.
3. Stick to the present tense, active voice.
4. Don't hesitate to use personal pronouns. Remember you're trying to talk to one person.
5. Don't overpunctuate; it kills copy flow.
6. Use contractions whenever possible because they're fast and personal.
7. Don't brag or boast, it's boring.
8. Write with flair.<sup>12</sup>

The following thoughts on making your message readable were developed by Dr. Rudolf Flesch.<sup>13</sup>

--The more words in a sentence, the more difficult it is to read and understand the sentence.

--The more syllables a word has, the more difficult it is to read and understand the word.

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<sup>11</sup>David L. Malickson, John W. Nason, "Applying Psychology," Advertising: How to Write The Kind That Works, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1977), p. 57.

<sup>12</sup>Adapted form, "Appendix: How to Use the Yardstick Formula" in Rudolf Flesch's The Art of Plain Talk, copyright, 1946, by Rudolf Flesch. Permission of Harper and Row.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

- The more personal references in a passage, the easier it is to read and understand the message.
- Apply common sense; it takes common sense to listen to other viewpoints and to appreciate that different people have different likes and dislikes.

This could go on forever. Consider what has been said here and write with an open mind and be ready to start many times over.

### Selecting Typeface: Choosing the Right One For the Situation

Type style is one element of the total message structure. The beginning designer concerns himself most with individual elements within his ad; the veteran designer sees the overall design, the composition, and the design's effect as more important, knowing that the whole of an ad is greater than the sum of its parts. The veteran designer is also concerned with how the ad looks when it is in position as opposed to sitting, mounted by itself.

Selection of type comes in execution and is an extension of the creative process discussed, visualization. Type selection is the process of selecting printed letters, words and symbols which have been styled into various styles and categories. "Choice of type can have almost as

much of an effect on communication as choice of words."<sup>14</sup>  
 There are an uncountable number of typefaces to choose from, each projecting a style and mood, reflecting the message it carries. Type can be graceful, powerful, loud, quiet, funny, modern, simple, old-fashioned, profound, startling and decorative, among others. "Picking a type for the mood it conveys makes more sense than picking it because you happen to like its looks."<sup>15</sup>

"Fitting into several categories are the many 'families' of types. The families are divided into series, and the series are divided into fonts. Modern Roman would be a category, Bodini would be a family in that category, Ultra Bodini would be a series within that family and 24-point Ultra Bodini would be a font in that series."<sup>16</sup> The type styles are available in a variety of font sizes, usually from 8 to 120 point. When you are designing your message, selection may be made from a printer's type book, which shows the typefaces and the variety of sizes available. Most printers have a wide variety of standard typefaces available, but for the more unusual typefaces, you may have to consult an artist who

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<sup>14</sup>Roy Nelson, The Design of Advertising (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1977), pp. 147-49.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.



would lay the type for you, or purchase the type yourself from an art supplier in the form of rub-on lettering and do the job yourself. Type that comes from the printer, which you select from his type book, is printed out via a composer, not unlike the old linotype machines used in newspapers, but with computer ease and sophistication added; the process is called photolettering.

There are many factors to consider when selecting type which will tell your story. Readability is the most important because if it can't be read and understood, you have wasted both time and money. There are some rules of thumb to follow:

1. The reader is used to certain things: capitals and lowercase, not all capitals.
2. Letters reading from left to right, not up and down.
3. Lines of type running horizontally.
4. Letters and words with even spacing.

Type is used in a variety of ways within the context of the advertisement, from headline to body copy. Body type is sectioned into paragraphs, and beginning of paragraphs are indicated with indentation, although this is not a standard rule. Type is usually broken into columns or blocks and take two forms: fully justified and flush left. Flush left means the right edge is ragged, type does not end in the precise point each line. Fully justified

type means the right and left edges are parallel, the way most commonly seen in books and magazines.

The rules for typography, for readability are not as applicable when you are working with display or headline and subhead type selection, or when you have only a few words to get an entire message across. In the case of display type, anything goes, as long as it is effective. Special typefaces, artist's and reproduction tricks may be employed to change the type character, create a personality and to attract attention to the message. Design considerations such as harmony, balance, unity, sequence and emphasis discussed earlier all apply in the selection and placement of type in the ad. Things such as unity and emphasis should be done with subtlety. One should avoid use of exclamation marks, instead using legitimate design innovations to make the headline exciting. An example of emphasis without the obvious tricks:

**Growing up with  
Devon**

TALL &  
THIN

**WYOV IS  
SOLID ROCK**

For every advertising practitioner, there is a theory he follows in type selection. The following quotes are from people in the art field and advertising business.<sup>17</sup>

Lawrence Bender, art director, Lawrence, Bender and Associates speaks about selecting typefaces for a given job:

I don't have a set rule. Sometimes it's an attitude I'm seeking; besides being a verbal message, type often functions graphically to reinforce the viewpoint of the piece. And in some instances it's conceivable that I may want to use a typeface very much in contrast with the attitude that's communicated. For example, if I'm talking about big, fat, bold tires I might want to use a very skinny, light typeface instead of the obvious since setting the type in bold black might be overkill and the message could come through stronger by very sharp visual contrast. Often, I look for simple readability, which is always a prime factor. There are instances where I've sacrificed a little readability in favor of using modern faces.

Barbara Schubeck, art director with Scale, McCabe, Sloves answers the same question about type selection:

A big clue to the solution of choosing type is found right in the word, 'typeface.' And since faces express emotions, type therefore has emotions. Once you're aware of the emotions, you'll know the particular essence of a particular typeface. A well-designed page of typography is usually a successful blend of type emotions, which in turn visualize the emotions of the copy or artwork. (For instance, I'd probably set this copy in Balloon Bold, tight not touching, 1/2" on the cap.)

Joh Fischer, art director, Benton and Bowles:

Typefaces are unimportant unless they're used to help make your concept live.

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<sup>17</sup>Quotes from article, "Question-of-the-issue: How Do You Select A Typeface or Typefaces For a Given Job?" Graphics Today, March, 1977, pp. 42-43.

If you don't have a concept you've got nothing. And no typeface in the world will help. One concept I did this year was "The Greatest Star Show Under The Sun, The Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon." The typeface had to communicate the special event. It sounds easy but it took me about two weeks to get the graphic direction I wanted. I couldn't find a face I wanted in any type book. I dug up an old circus book and found the typeface which wasn't a typeface at all. The poster had to be hand-lettered because it was the only way to make my concept live.

Ken Parkhurst, art director, Ken Parkhurst & Associates, Inc., states:

I modify type choices depending on what kind of piece and public it is for. The first order of business is to understand the nature of the communication and define the character of the message. The type face should be felicitous to the content and purpose of the piece. Style (typeface, size, arrangement) affects the reader below the conscious level. It can either reinforce or deny the literal message. To use type effectively, it is necessary for the designer to both feel the effects of style and objectively evaluate which of these is appropriate to the piece. In this way he can avoid meaningless fads and standard cliches. Amateurish handling of type tends to produce cliché type style choices and chaotic displays which defeat the reader. In general, and despite some of the prevailing modes, selection of type should aim at simplicity of choice, arrangement and size range. The result should invite the eye.

Essentially it's a matter of matching the personality of the typeface with the personality of the graphic idea. I usually have a type 'look' in mind at the concept stage of a job.

Type should be selected with the following considerations: it should fit with the tone and approach you have selected for the message. It should reflect the message content and personality and tell a large part

of the story at a glance whenever possible. Typefaces should number no more than two or three different faces for one ad. Too many different faces detracts from readability.

### The Visual Element: Illustration and Art

As a message designer, one of the first decisions you will make regarding execution is determining the visual aspect of the message. What art you decide on will determine the content of the headline, the style of the type, positioning of the elements, copy style and technique and the general appearance of the advertisement. The visual may come from a pre-selected picture or from the visualization process, which must then be transformed into the physical element. "Whether the art provides the ad's pivot or simply emphasizes a point made by the copy, its nature is crucial to the ad's effectiveness. Few ads attempt to do their job with type alone."<sup>18</sup>

Most designers agree that illustration is the most important element in the advertisement because it can make or break the message's effectiveness. Illustration is powerful, having the ability to tell a story in a picture, capture a mood in a glance, and demonstrate a benefit easily. The illustration must work as one with the headline and the benefit offering, together making a strong, unified statement. The illustration should have an obvious tie to the headline and the headline should have an obvious tie to the copy. In other words, everything should fit

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<sup>18</sup> Arthur T. Turnbull, Russel N. Baird, The Graphics of Communication (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976).

together like a puzzle.

Much of the effectiveness of illustrations comes from the variety of communication functions they can perform and the many forms they can take. The main function of illustration is to attract attention. The main function of photographs is to duplicate an image, and their main advantage is to inform and arouse emotions accurately. The true-to-life accuracy of the camera lens cannot be duplicated in art. The advantage of art over photography is the ability to instruct through drawings, such as directions which accompany a model airplane. Illustrations are also effective when the objective is to explain. Entertainment is another area where art and illustration can be used to amuse the consumer and inform, persuade and motivate him. Combinations of illustrations and techniques may be used to achieve maximum effectiveness. The most effective combination of all is that of illustrations and words, the visual and verbal combination.

Whether you choose a photograph or illustration, the picture is subject to the same design principles, line and symbolism theories discussed in previous chapters. The effective visual element is a well-designed picture, incorporating balance, unity, proportion and emphasis into a total composition. Size, scale and type of medium are considerations to make when you are selecting or composing an illustration.

There are a variety of techniques and forms to be used in illustration which when used effectively can produce a variety of art forms. First you must consider the medium. Magazine or newspaper is different from direct mail and outdoor, with each medium having it's own restrictions on the kind of art that can be used. The kinds of renderings that are available for halftone reproduction (such as for any print medium like newspaper and magazine, with color) include: photographs, acrylic paintings, tempura, designer's colors in marker and paint form, water-color paintings, wash drawings, pastel or pencil drawings. Among the kinds of line reproductions: simple black and white line drawings, cross-hatch drawings and any continuous tone drawings. These kinds of drawings produce a variety of styles, each different from the others.

The selection of an illustration is a difficult process when you realize the variety of artistic rendering and photographic techniques available. Photography aside, consider the numerous artistic styles available to illustrate the benefit, create a mood and motivate the consumer. Selecting illustration style and technique is not to be confused with illustration content decisions, visualization and 'writing the art.' Assuming illustration content and approach has been selected, visualized and conceptualized in writing through the afore described 'writing the



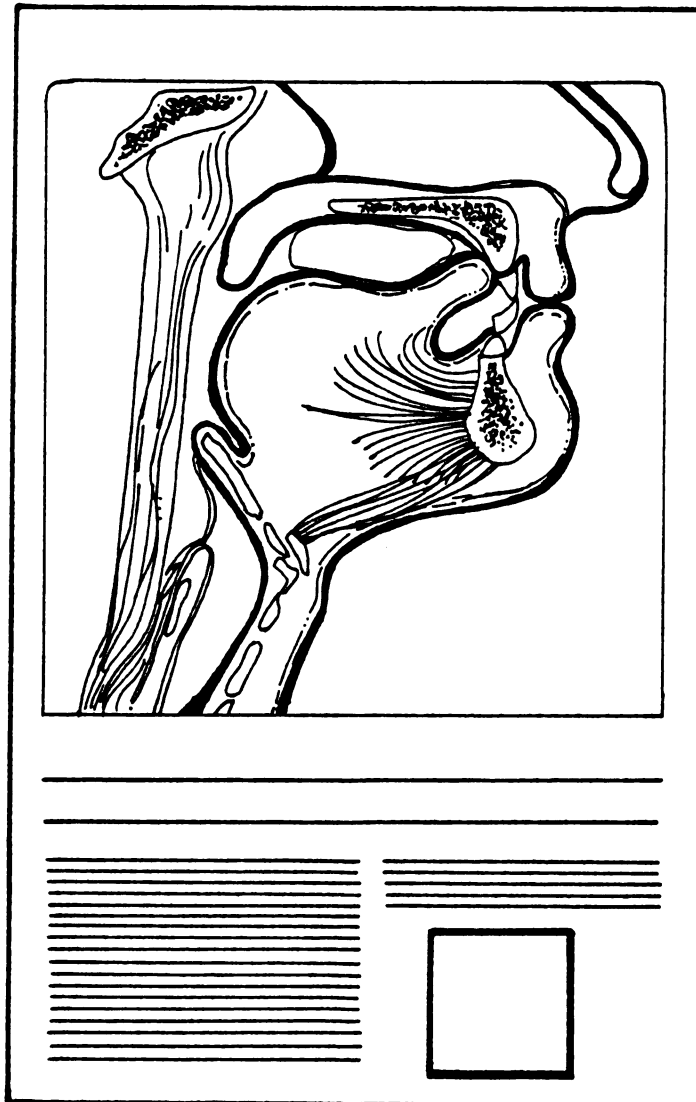
art,' the selection of illustration style becomes a priority decision.

Illustrations are produced in a variety of techniques and by artists with individual styles. The style and technique you choose to carry out your message will greatly affect the appearance and effectiveness of the message. Like the message content the artistic style and technique you choose to carry out the message must also be relevant and logical. Form must follow function, so consider what function the illustration has in the message and let it's form follow a natural course. For example:

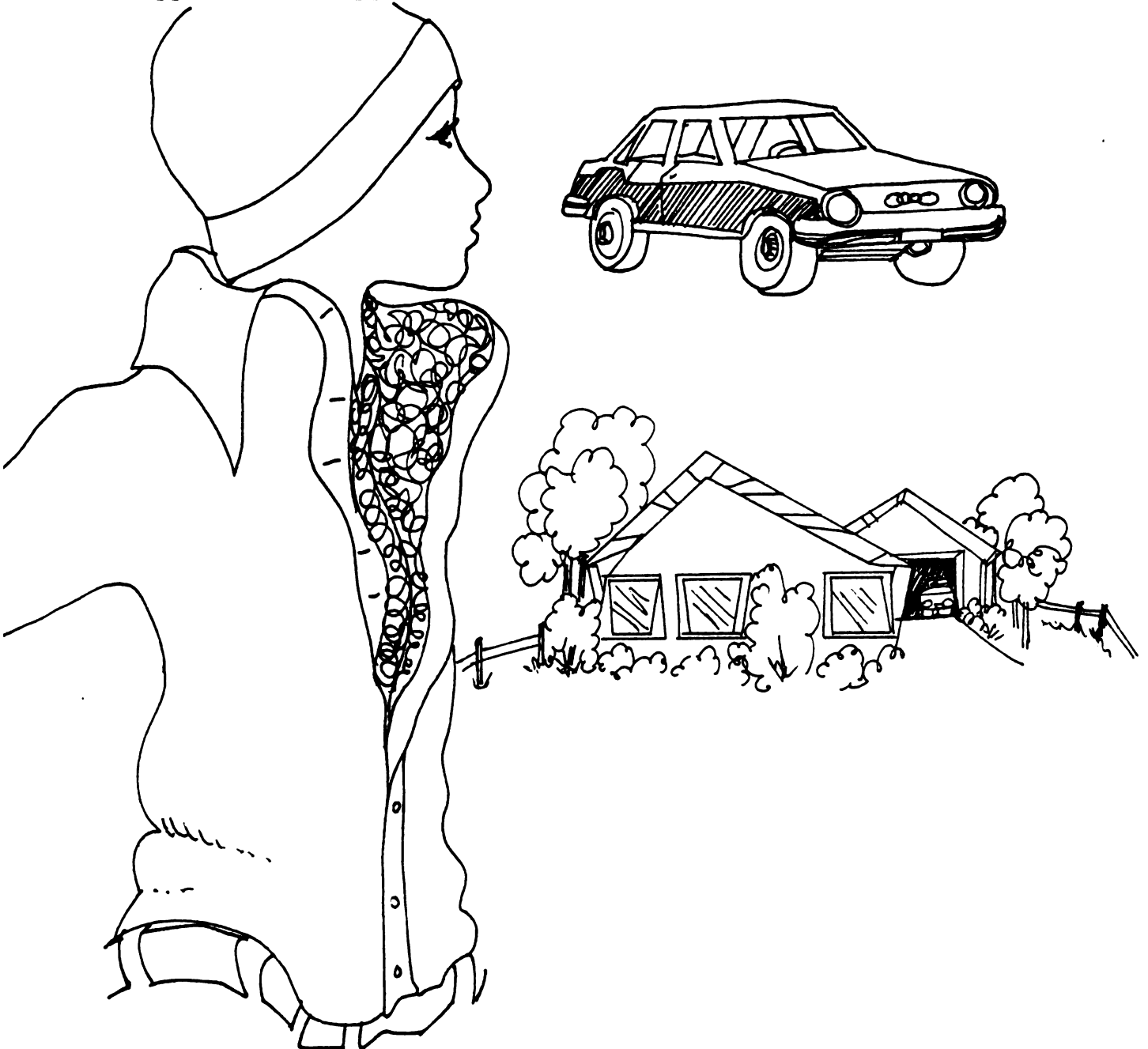
The product is a new super bubble-blowing bubble-gum aimed at children 7-12 years old. The selected benefit is the super size bubbles that can be blown with the gum. The function of the illustration is to introduce, demonstrate and explain the benefit. The approach has been selected as humorous with cartoon characters interacting with children acting as spokesman. The technique and style of illustration must follow illustration functions, so it will be animated cartoon in simple line form and colorful because considering the age of the consumer it would be illogical to use a detailed, sophisticated cartoon style.

A style has to do with the general mood or feeling the art projects and art styles vary greatly from one artist to another. When you are selecting style and technique, be careful to review all possibilities. Don't settle for less than the best, most effective style available. While the following examples are not comprehensive and some areas will overlap, they exemplify a variety of artistic styles to consider.

Example 1. Close or Finished Art, is art which is smooth, polished and precise. There are no imperfections in the drawing technique itself. The art has a precise and exactness about it, sometimes a lifelike quality. As shown here, it demonstrates a procedure where precision is necessary.

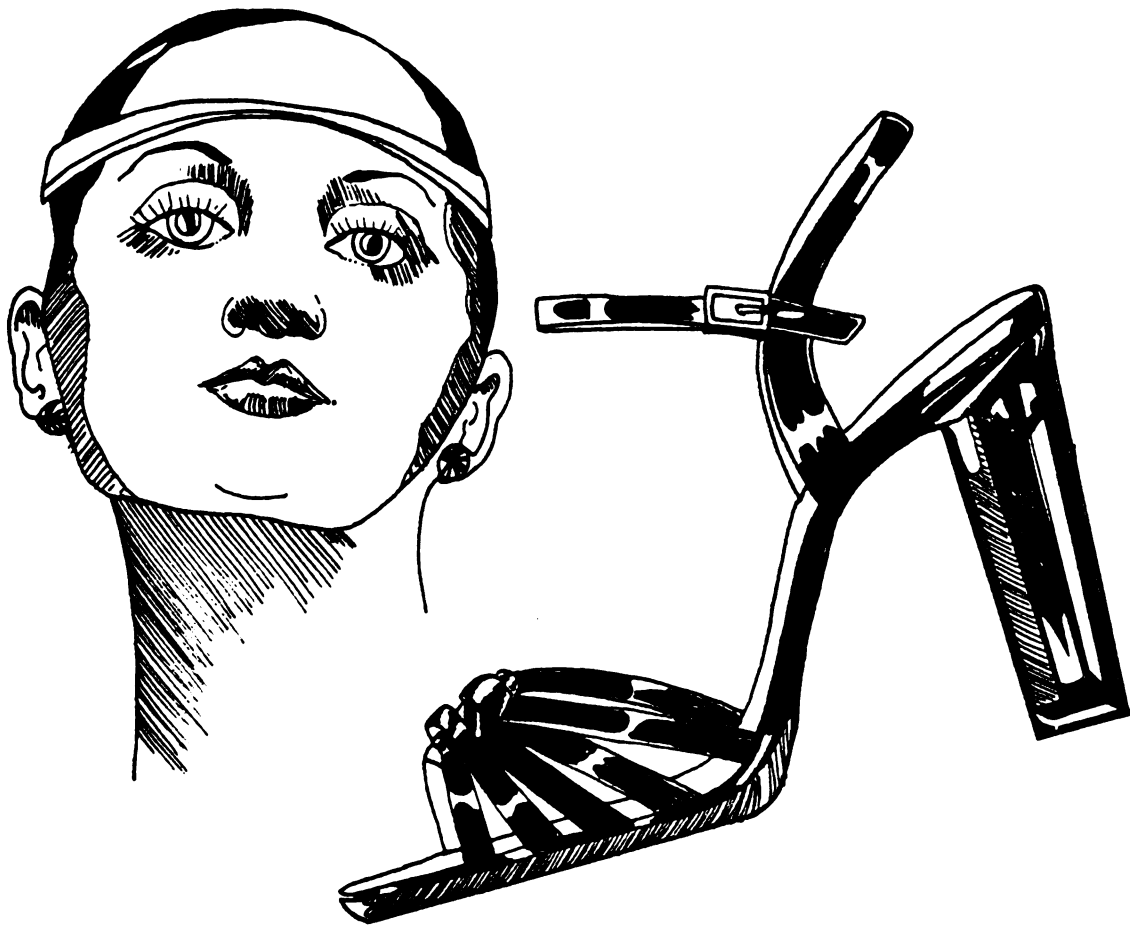


Example 2. Loose Art. This style is relaxed, moves with ease and gives a feeling of being crude and imperfect, giving the impression it was done hastily. The line strokes are bold and expressive. This style lends itself well to a message with a similar relaxed approach in copy and headline.



Example 3. Realistic or Representation Art.

This style is highly detailed, ranging from stylized representation to surrealistic. This style can be used to attract attention, such as in sentimental-realistic Norman Rockwell words, or attract attention and shock, such as in supersurrealistic styles which employ distortion.



Example 4. Simplified or Abstract Art. This style in art is simplified to fundamental form, often with subtle meanings and symbolism. Consumer reaction is more likely to be emotional than intellectual. Abstract art is commonly seen in retail advertising.



Example 5. Cartoon Art. This style can be entertaining and amusing while informing, persuading and motivating. Cartoons can exaggerate and distort, or they can be used to put things into their proper perspective. Cartoon art can be seen in many forms, ranging from the product spokesman such as the Nestle's Quick rabbit to such editorial cartoon strips as Doonesberry and Peanuts. Cartoon styles vary from one artist to another, and most well known characters are copyrighted.



### Which Is Best? Art or Photography

The following viewpoints represent practitioners in the fields of advertising and graphic design. The point of discussion is which is most effective, art or photography, and at what point does the decision have to be made? Joseph O'Brien, creative group supervisor, Horton, Church & Goof, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island:

"The decision comes at the concept stage. I feel the prime criterion for a communicator is not to let the client dictate this very important decision." Bill Bonnell

III, Manager of Design, IBM Corporation, Chicago, Ill.:

The decision is made as soon as the communication objective of the project is established. Rarely are the two interchangeable. Photographs can make very subtle indications. Illustration can show things which aren't read or sometimes can be more telling and realistic than a photograph. Each form has its own great merits which either relate to a problem, due to its content, or they don't.

Victor J. Closi, Art Director, Field and Stream, New York, New York:

The usage of illustration or photography in a magazine must relate to its story content. It should not have a forced, stilted, contrived composition and appearance. It should make a direct and impressionable visual statement, like the famous photo of the Marines raising the U.S. flag. When I choose a story to be illustrated in art, I expect the illustrator to be imaginative in his approach and handling than what could be done with a camera. When directing an assignment, one should make sure the illustrator or photographer fully understands what the story is about. Both should never be overdirected because it could inhibit their creative freedom and design.

Photograph or illustration, the picture you choose is subject to the same principle of form following function. Often when the benefit is intangible, symbolism achieved through photography or abstract illustration can be used to communicate effectively. Illustration and photography are subject to the same principles of design mentioned in Chapter Two. The effective advertising visual is a well-designed picture, with composition and arrangement as important as medium. The following describes the arrangement of the visual elements into a total message package, known as layout or execution.

#### Indicating Art in Layout

Art in layout only calls for the feel of the planned art. You may not be an artist, but may find yourself in the situation of designing layouts. Indicating art means just that . . . an indication. The indication can be sketchy, but should indicate the size, shape, direction of the art, and the jist of the mood. If a drawing will be a line drawing, use a sharp pencil to indicate shape, use a piece of charcoal to indicate tones, shadows. Tone is important. Indicate shapes and sizes. If you have a photograph to work from, simplify it in the rough up. Do not trace any glossy photograph which will be used in publication; tracing ruins the photograph for reproduction. Indicate copy blocks with light lines or



copy cut-out. If you are producing the layout and someone else will carry out your ideas, be sure all information is clear for the printer. Make sure type sizes are correct, i.e., bold for headline, and the correct font or typeface is used, i.e., helvetic medium.

Indicating the art is actually the mental image you have in your head down on paper, sometimes called "writing the art." It means describing the art or photography that will tell your story. The following is an example of "writing the art," a description of a visual that will be duly supported by copy and headline. The product is Tropical Tan Suntan Lotion. The visual is described as:

A beautiful 24-year old voluptuous blond female lying horizontally on her side facing you. She is wearing a tight and revealing sun-yellow bikini, a deep bronze tan and a laughing pearl-white smile. The setting is tropical; white sand, palms in the background, brilliant blue ocean and a cloudless blue sky. The camera shoot shows the woman full length. Close-up and sitting full-size just in back of her is a ferocious but tame looking tiger. Together these two project a feeling of power and authority. Included in the visual is a larger-than-life bottle of Tropical Tan Suntan Lotion. The woman's gaze is direct and the body language subtle and sexual. The headline ties the visual elements together and crystalizes the benefit: "GET A DEEP SAVAGE TAN WITH TROPICAL TAN SUNTAN LOTION."

"Writing the art" should give an accurate account of the visual picture, including minute details which give subtle message clues.

### Trademark: Logo Designs

The logo type is an identification symbol, usually seen in company or product advertisements. Also known as a trademark, or sig, the logo is any name, symbol or visual device, or a combination of these, used by a manufacturer to identify his product or products and distinguish them from all others on the market.

Logo or trademark are not to be confused with tradename, which refers to the name of the company, or product.

Logo/trademark functions include the following:

1. Indicate origin of the product.
2. Guarantee quality consistency. The trademark tells the consumer the product is the same each time it is purchased.
3. Acts as an advertisement, attracting attention, reminding, persuading, influencing and motivating the consumer. Whether used in an advertisement, on a package cover, company stationary or invoices, it serves the same purpose, it furthers the identification purpose.

Trademark designs can range from literal to abstract and symbolic. The more symbolic, the more successful because they say and imply more than written literal words.

George Nelson defines a symbol: "Symbols look to me like a kind of fly paper, to which various associations get stuck. Then the symbol gets to be a real symbol."<sup>19</sup>

Designing a product or corporate logo is a process similar to message design. Creativity functions as an impetus throughout the process which draws on conceptualization of corporate image into symbolic execution. Designing of the logo must involve thought of product benefit, corporate and product image, consumer opinion and attitude and must incorporate the afore mentioned theories and principles of design.

According to Roy Nelson, from a design standpoint, a trademark must be:

1. original
2. legible
3. stimulating
4. appropriate to the product
5. easy to remember.

It can take the following forms:

1. symbol
2. lettering, initials, or numbers
3. combination of all these.<sup>20</sup>

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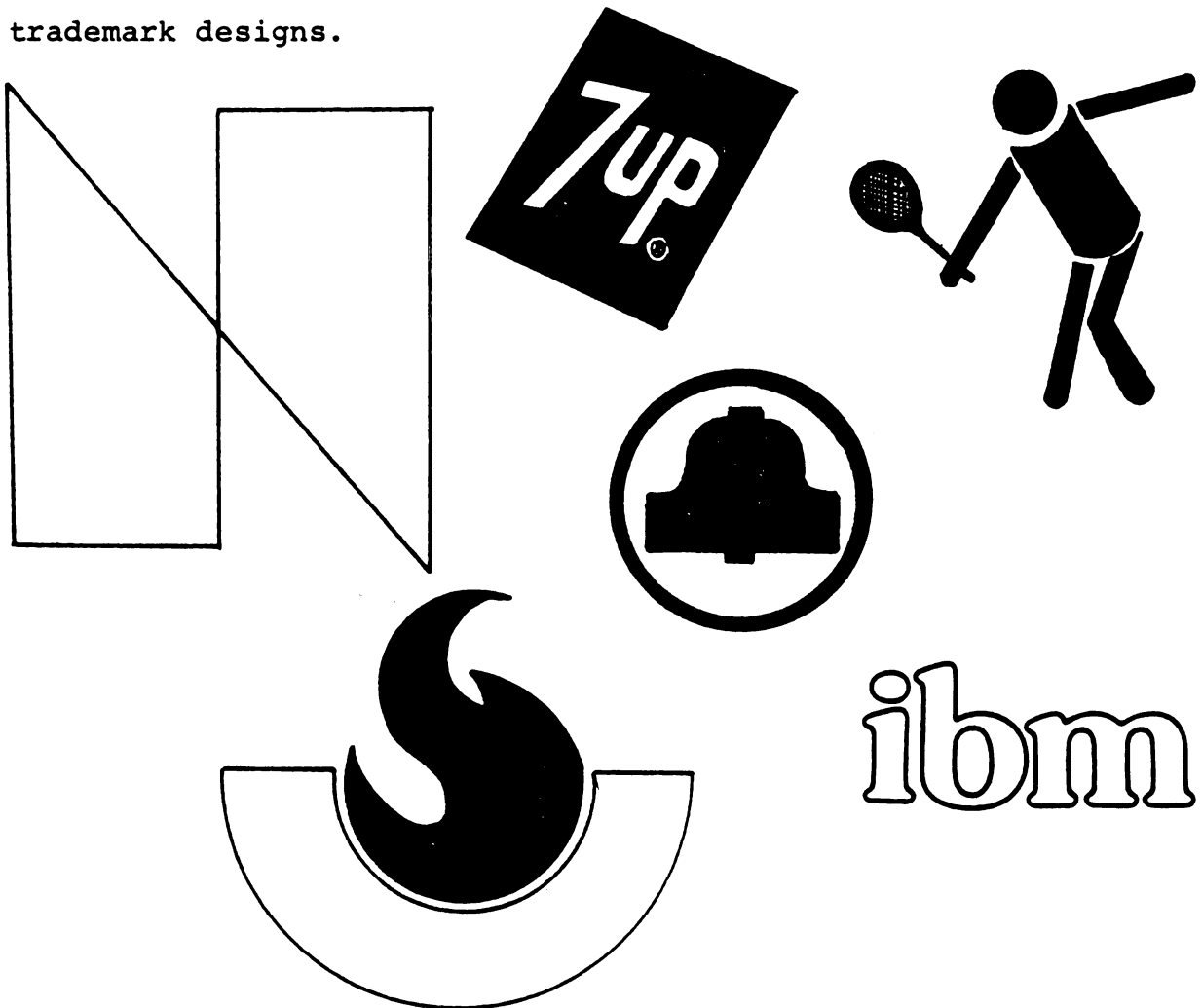
<sup>19</sup>Elwood Whitney (editor), Symbology: The Use of Symbols in Visual Communications (New York: Hastings House, Publishers, 1960), p. 116.

<sup>20</sup>Roy Paul Nelson, The Design of Advertising (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., Publishers, 1978). p. 283.

Designing or selecting a logo is a difficult task, and depending on the image you wish to project, the following list suggests precautions to avoid:

1. Avoid background props which tend to date the logo. Simplicity will make the date less identifiable.
2. Avoid pictures of people in modern dress.
3. Avoid unusual typefaces which are faddish and difficult to read.

The following are examples of success logo and trademark designs.



### Layout

"Layout" is the execution of an advertising idea into physical message form. It is the organization of all the message elements discussed; headline, copy, illustration, copy and logo into a predetermined space. As message designer you are responsible for the total look or total impression of the advertisement, created through the organization of the elements into a pleasing, unified whole. Layout is a problem-solving process, using different design related formats to solve advertising problems.

Recall the design principles discussed in Chapter Two, things like balance, proportion, sequence, unity and emphasis. A designer uses these principles in solving all kinds of communication problems, problems that are very different as exemplified:

1. A grocery store ad with many items that must be emphasized.
2. An expensive appliance that needs long copy for explanation.
3. A product benefit which needs instant recognition.
4. A product has more than one important benefit to offer.
5. A department store that hopes to reposition itself in the market as a sophisticated trend setter.
6. The position of the message in the vehicle, such

as magazine or newspaper makes it obscure within the masses.

7. Sequential demonstration of product and benefit is needed to achieve full impact.

### Layout Formats

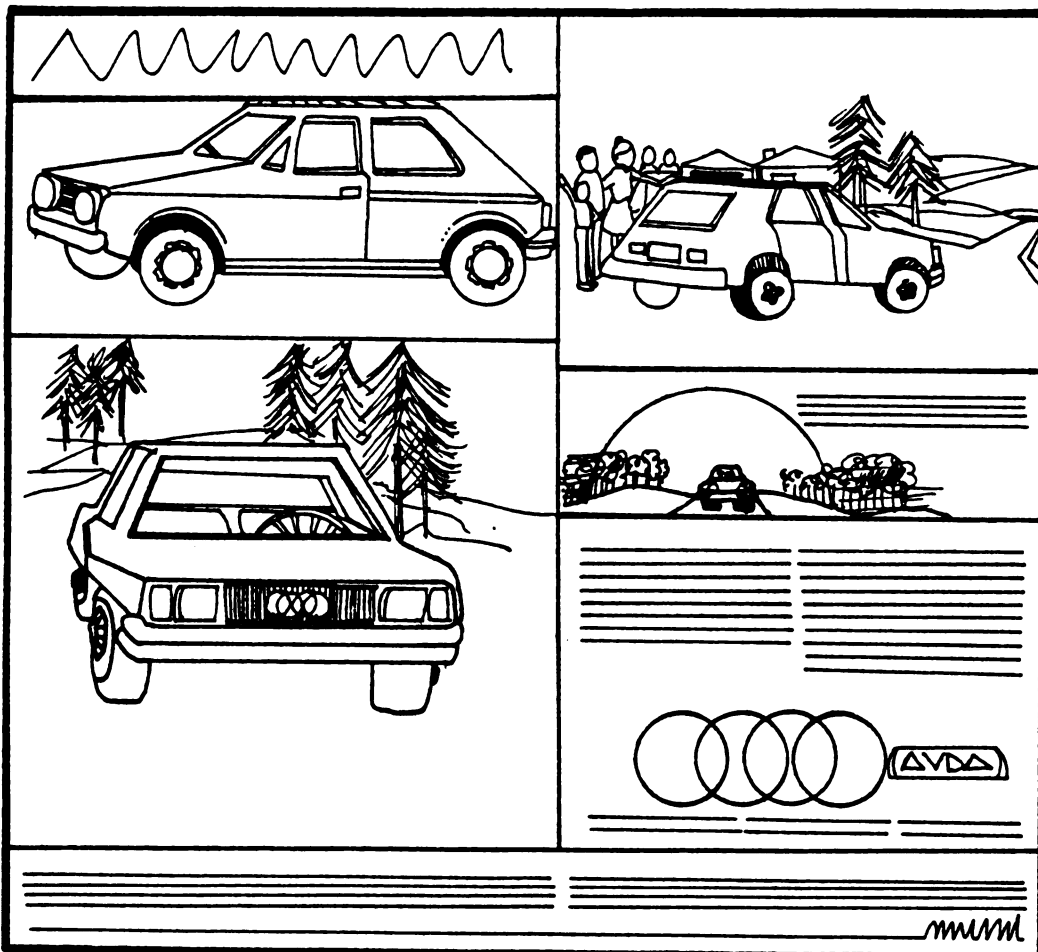
There are a variety of layout "formats," general structures or positioning of elements: copy, illustration, headline, subheads, logo, etc. Most formats listed below, (suggested by Gordon E. White and Keith S. Hafner in Advertising Writing and Roy P. Nelson in The Design of Advertising), follow basic layout design and principles.

### Mondrian Layout

Named after Dutch painter Piet Mondrian who worked only in vertical and horizontal rectangular arrangements, this style is often used in advertising design.

A Mondrian arrangement is an easy, logical, workable, effective way to display type and art. The Mondrian style is concerned with proportion as a design principle. Newspaper layouts are most closely attuned to Mondrian format, broken into column and cut-off boxes. The Mondrian format deals with the arrangements of rectangular and square shapes, accents placed with varying thick-thin lines filling some rectangles with copy, others with half tones and still others with white spaces.

The Mondrian layout can be effectively used to solve such problems suggested in example 2 where the copy is lengthy, the approach direct and the content informational. This format lends itself to the function of orderly information giving, easing the burden of lengthy copy by breaking the space into horizontal and vertical blocks. The Mondrian format also lends itself nicely to the formality of the product and message content through it's balance and proportion, as seen in the example below.



### Picture Layout--Post Layout

This format was pioneered by Doyle, Dave and Bernbach. It fills 80% of layout space with picture and the remaining space with tightly edited copy. It isn't "art-for-art's sake," but an almost overpowering display of picture followed by a one line headline below the picture and copy broken into two or three short columns. Positioning of headline and scant copy in different location and addition of smaller pictures or line art add variation.

The nature of the picture will affect the placement and style of typeface in the headline. It is through careful element arrangement that the design avoids having the copy look like filler.

This format is an excellent solution to the communication problem described in example 3 in which a product and benefit needs instant recognition. It can be effectively used to solve example 5 with an important design principle, emphasis. Here, a retailer is looking for an image change, an attention-getter in the form of a striking illustration which will stay in the consumer's mind. The following is an example of picture layout:



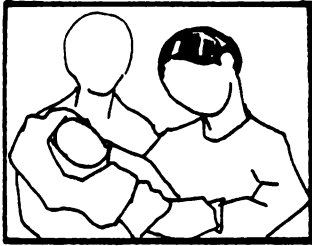
### Copy-Heavy Layout--Editorial Layout

There are two reasons why this mostly copy format may be chosen over other styles:

1. What has to be said is too involved, too important, too unique, too dignified to put in pictures.
2. Most other ads in the medium will be picture-oriented, so that a quiet copy format provides contrast. This form usually employs formal balance principles. Lines and headlines are centered, typefaces more conservative, and everything is in balance and there is a feeling of dignity.

When copy is long, it must be broken into easy-to-take groupings. White space between copy blocks must be used effectively to create a visually pleasing design. Type is usually justified, and subheads should be lush right, left or centered.

Copy-heavy or editorial layout uses the design principles of balance and proportion to solve communication problems exemplified in 4 where a product has more than one benefit to offer and needs lengthy copy to explain and persuade. This format lends itself well to very formal styles and approaches.



el m d a c h l u l u l u l u l u l u  
 u u u u u u u u u u u u u u u u  
 l o m m i o c e p a s h i c  
 o n e m c e s n e l e u e r r

o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o

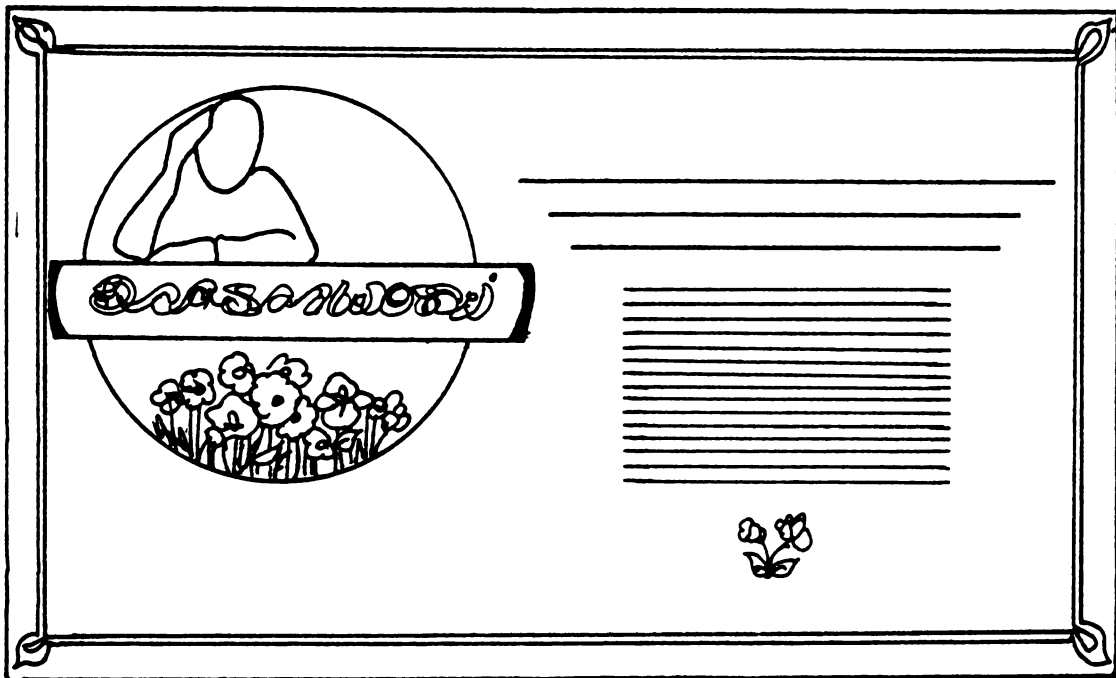
o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o o



### Frame Layout

Employs arrangement of elements with photograph, illustration or layout itself for the 'framing' of an important point. The format keeps things within boundaries, using borders, placing copy within artwork. A variation of this uses photo or art covering the whole layout and surprinted or reversed out copy placed over lighted areas.

An excellent solution to example 6, the obscure advertisement amid hundreds, the frame layout uses the principle of unity to tie the message together. A second design principle, emphasis, in the form of a frame or border, attracts consumer attention.

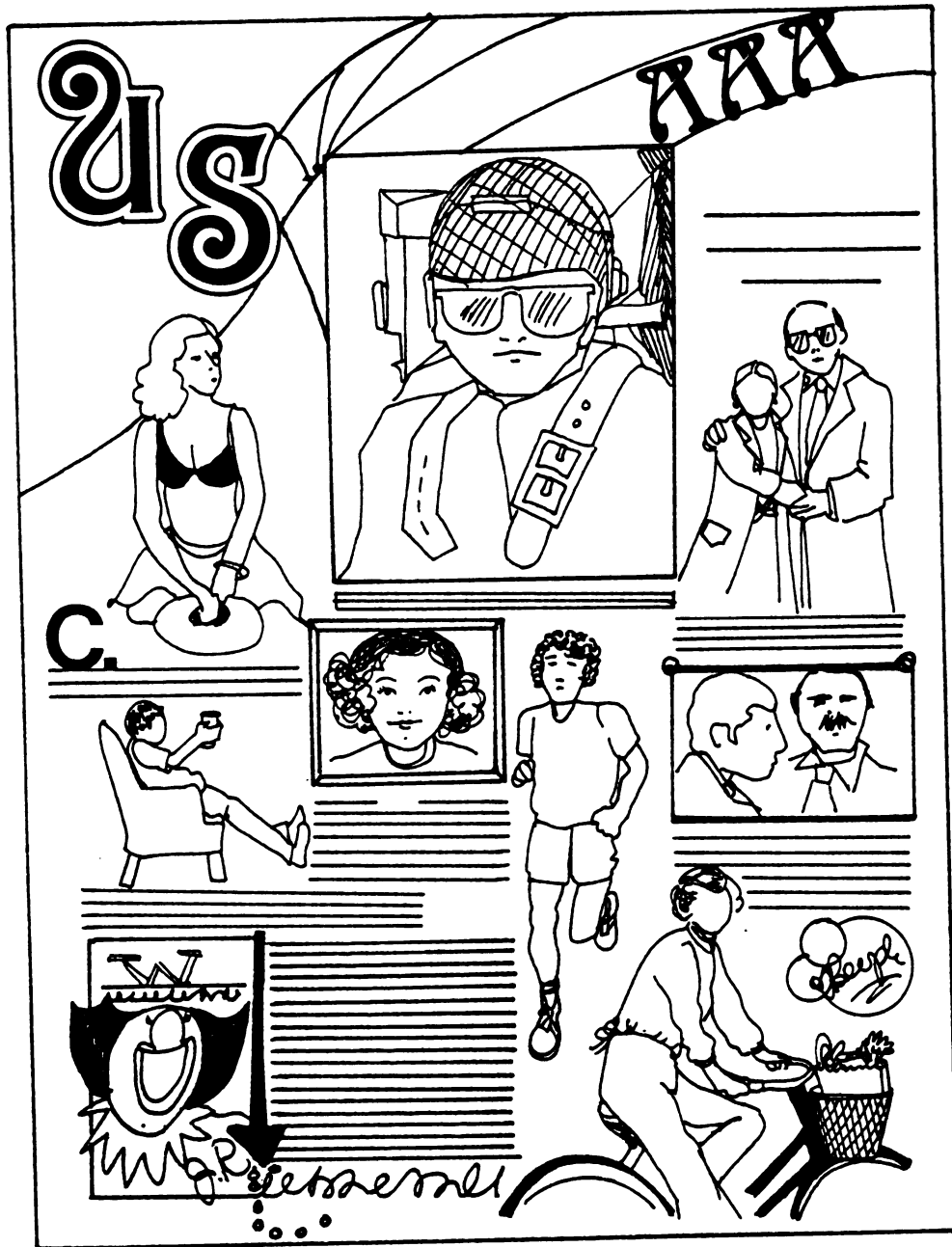


### Picture-Cluster Layouts or Circus Layout

This is an attention-getting format, filled with many photographs, large and reversed type areas, arrangement of lines and designs set to arouse interest. Curves are set next to angles, tilts next to verticles. The arrangement looks haphazard but is actually well planned and follows many design principles. It is an excellent way to deal with many components or topics in one message. Circus encompasses many layout approaches.

The elements are separated into units which are then organized into a unified pattern. Proposition and balance are two important principles to employ. Variety, however, should be the main concern, achieved through assortments of size, shape and tone changes.

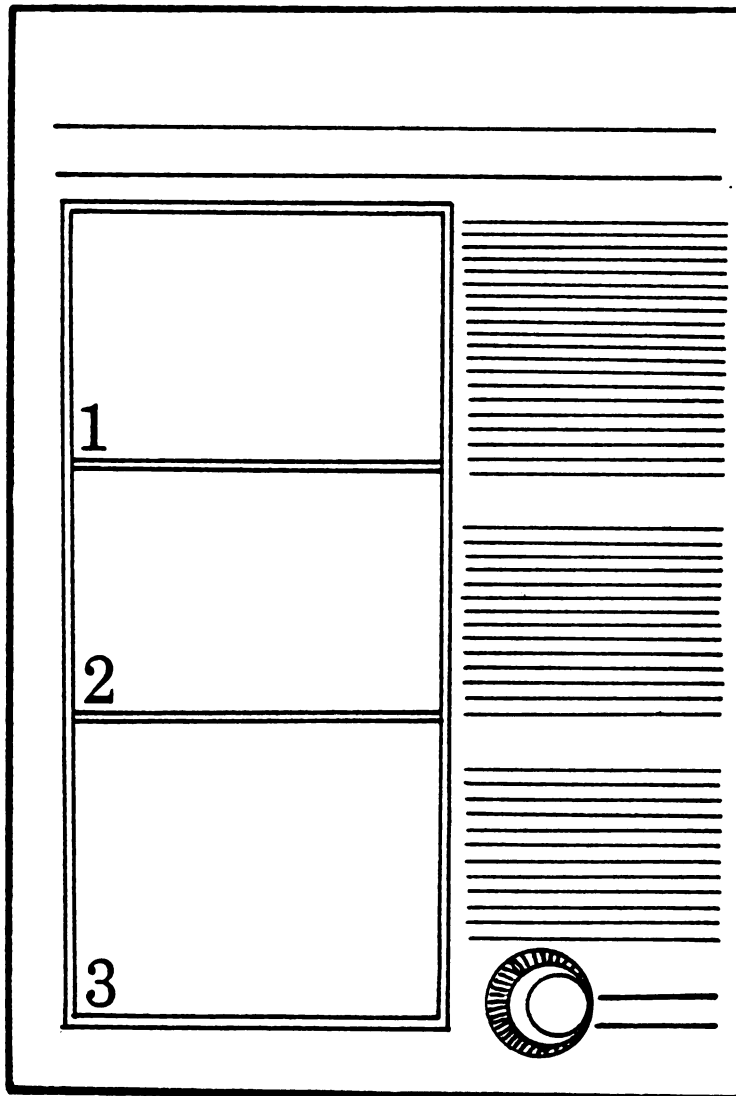
Circus layout can be used in a variety of ways, but most importantly uses the principles of sequence unity plus emphasis to tell a story with many different parts. It easily solves the problem exemplified in #1 in which a grocery store has many items to advertise, each must be emphasized.



Comic-Strip Layout or Multi Panel Layout

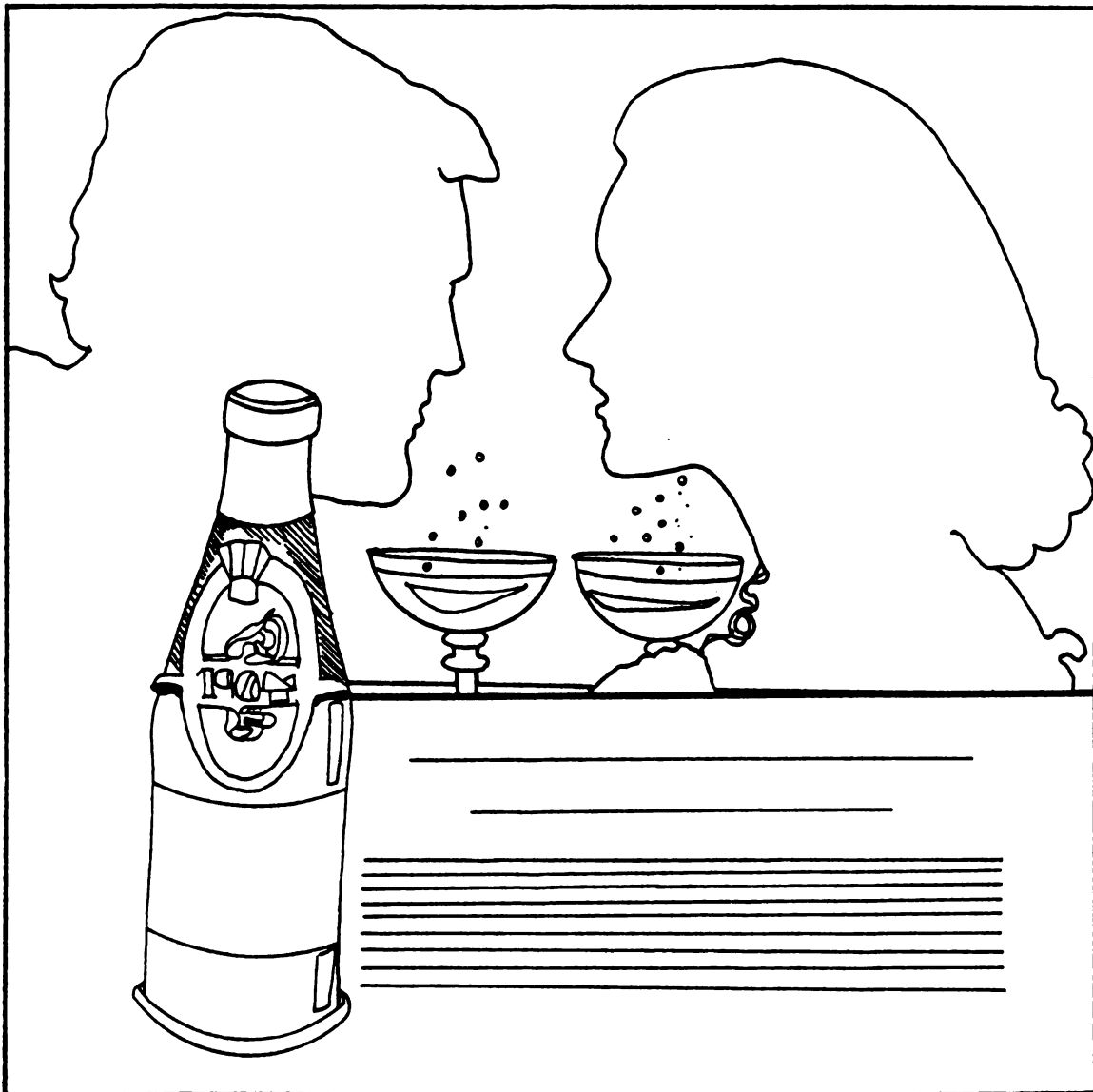
Like a comic strip sequence, with sophistication added, the multipanel allows the product or benefit to be shown 'in action'; showing sequential change or before and after, telling a story.

Multi panel layout design solves the problem exemplified in number 7 where sequential demonstration of a benefit adds needed impact to the advertising message.



### Silhouette Layout

Layout is designed to form a silhouette, using reverse type on a dark background, and irregular shapes always showing a side or 3/4 view for interest. To maintain unity throughout the layout, the elements should be in close proximity or even touching one another, at spots unrelated to each other. This accomplishes two things: (1) prevents the white frame from turning into an even halo that could diminish the ad's apparent size and (2) it prevents the medium's encroaching on white space.



### Type-Specimen Layout

This format involves the use of type to carry the message. Type specimen themselves are works of art and may be used to attract attention and lead the eye when placed according to some design principles. Headlines and copy blocks are usually larger than the normal 10 or 12 point usually seen. The type often takes the place of the art itself.

Type-specimen layout is an excellent solution to the problem exemplified in number 2 in which the product and benefit calls for detailed and lengthy explanations.





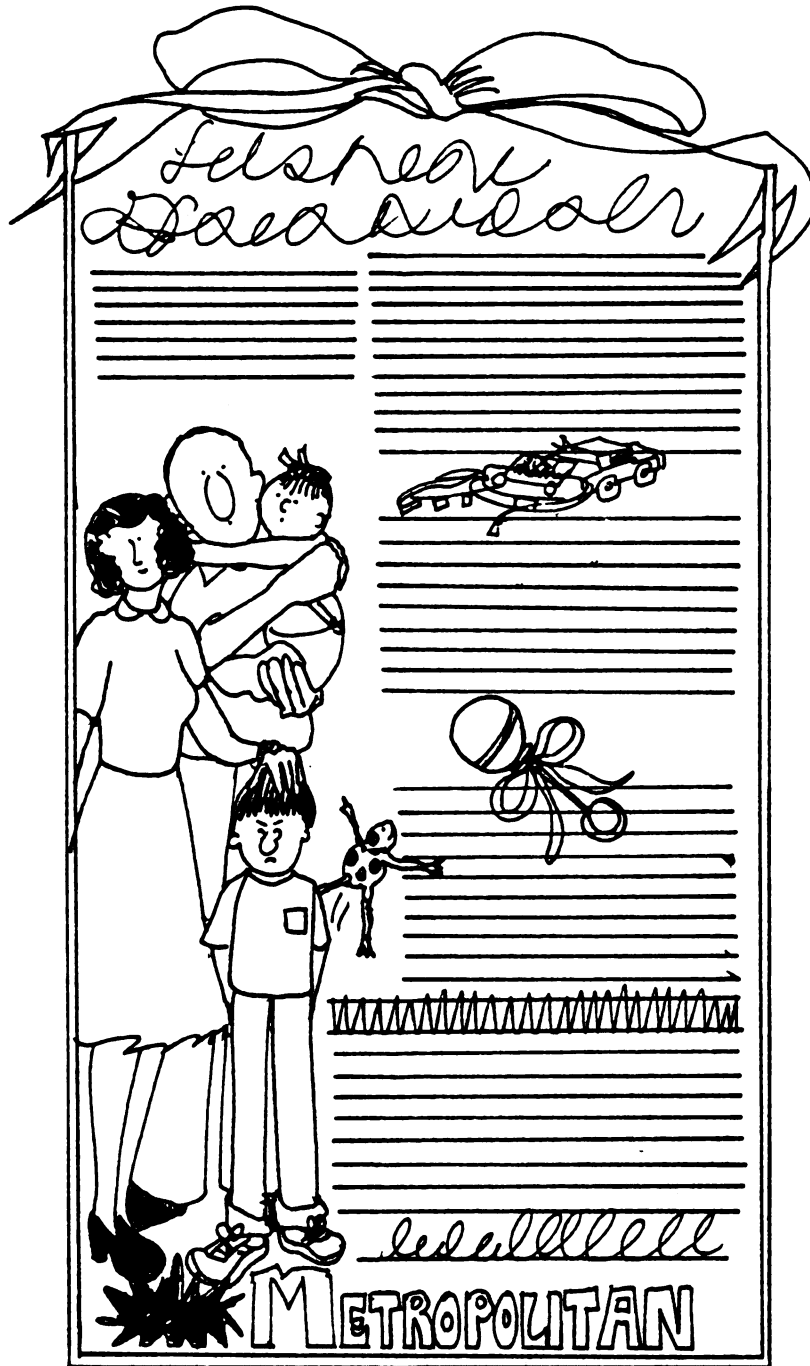
### Rebus Layout

It is a format which uses illustrations to exemplify a benefit or a story. Like a picture puzzle, words are sometimes omitted and pictures inserted to add variety and uniqueness. The idea is to maintain clarity of story but to add pictures for interest. Copy can consist of captions under pictures.

The point of giving these examples, is to provide some ground for thought about options before beginning thumbnails. Which format would best exemplify the benefit offered? Beginning with one can lead to experimentation.

This type of layout solves the problem exemplified in numbers 3, 4 and 5 in which the visual carries substantial weight in informing, demonstrating and motivating.





## Color

### The Use of Color in Layout

In 1976, about 70% of all advertisements in business publications run in two or more colors, reported Charles S. Mill, president of the American Business Press, in what he said was "a conservative estimate."

Color calls for attention, it creates atmosphere, stimulates consumers and emphasizes what is important. The product, the consumer and the advertiser benefit from the use of color. The product's benefits are more apparent: the consumer sees a more accurate and visually pleasing picture, and the advertiser gains increased sales with the use of color in advertising. Studies done by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Bureau of Advertising in 1971 show that with one color added, ads in newspapers "influence" 50% more sales than black-and-white ads. Full color (three-color) ads in newspapers "generate" 70% greater sales than black and white ads.<sup>21</sup>

When color is added, people are more likely to become actively involved in the ad. When the ad impetus is placed on shape, the consumer is forced to participate in the ad. Color calls out to the consumer, offering realism. It enhances product, denotes quality and craftsmanship and subtle tone changes that black and white misses.

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<sup>21</sup>Print Advertising Association News, March, 1971, p. 1.

For example, because we judge how good food is likely to taste by its color, using color in an ad for a cake mix helps us evoke appetite appeal, an effect crucial to the success of food advertisements. Color selections and combinations will depend upon a variety of factors, including audience, product, benefit, message approach and tone and other variables influencing message style.

As we grow up, we learn to associate certain colors with certain effects or feelings. Blue skies and white snows teach us to associate blueness, especially lighter blues, with coolness, for example. Because we bring such associations to the color, advertisers can use the color to evoke the feeling. For example, imagine a photograph in color of a white snow covered mountain. In the background, a brilliant blue sky frames the mountain. The headline promises how cool and refreshing the taste of the product is. . ."<sup>22</sup>

The following terminologies are used in reference to color characteristics, terminologies that may help make color selection a more logical process.

Color has three 'dimensions' that affect the way it looks. These dimensions or characteristics are:

Hue--refers to the color itself, for example, red, blue, or yellow.

Value--refers to the depth of color . . . the amount of or lack of light affects value. By adding

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<sup>22</sup>Dr. Charles Mauldin, Department of Advertising,  
Michigan State University, East Lansing.

white, the value becomes greater. Adding dark creates less value, shading.

Intensity--is the brilliancy and brightness of color. Chroma is another word used in reference to intensity.

### Symbolism of Color

Certain colors communicate things that words cannot. This is the symbolism of color. Color is another tool for transmitting concept into layout when selected and used effectively. Most color selection has its origin in research because it's necessary to know consumer preferences and subconscious implications color can have for him. Colors stimulate emotion and mood. The following list suggested by Roy Nelson in The Design of Advertising, as color combinations that are emotion and mood stimulators:

Cool colors are greens, blues and purples.

Warm colors are reds, browns and yellows.

The following colors have symbolic meanings:

Red--passion, appropriate to religion,

Orange--color of warmth, energy, force,

Violet--combination of red and blue denotes  
royalty, loneliness,

Blue--cool, passive, aloofness, feeling of  
transparency,

Green--restful, fresh, fruitful, guilt, disease,  
terror,

White--purity, truth,

Black--depression, sorrow, gloom, death.

To make objects within a layout look bigger, or to show emphasis, color them bright, with colors of high intensity. Bright color radiates, draws the eye out, expands the object's apparent size. There must be some thought to these three elements of color when selecting and combining colors in an advertisement, if the message effectiveness is to be maximized. Color combinations such as red and brown or green and black work well in an ad only when hue, intensity and value are consistent and harmonious. Study of the color wheel, primary, secondary and tertiary colors characteristics and some basic rules of color will make color selection easier and more effective.

When running color in an advertising message, the more unconventional and imaginative its use, the more effective the message will be. Some unusual applications of color include:

- select emphasis area in off-beat areas within the layout.

- Run color tints behind copy blocks (careful with intensity as to avoid reduction in readability).

- Change color value as it covers an area,

creating a light to dark tonal change.

--Run headline and logo in color and spot color elsewhere for balance and eye flow.

--Combine odd paper color and texture (in print) with unusual (yet complimentary) colors, for example: high gloss paper and magenta ink, or ivory, lightly textured paper with a soft brown ink . . . the combinations will give off totally different feeling and will have very different appeal. Experiment with combinations and color positioning before making any final decisions. Base any decision on research, personal experience or advice of old pros.

Color has characteristics which can enhance the message's effectiveness such as in the situation of a 2-page spread in which the halves of an ad are separated by a gutter. Color can be used to unify the pages by running a color screen or bar across the pages, thus making it obvious to the reader that the two pages belong together, that they are one ad.

While color may be expensive, such characteristics which enhance the message's effectiveness make the cost worth the price. Don't overlook the possibility of color at any level, in any medium because of its unique value.

## SUMMARY

This thesis has been concerned with the major principles, theories and processes surrounding the creation of effective advertisements.

With creativity as an impetus, the process begins with a copy platform which is used to gather, sort and analyze information concerning the product, the market and the consumer. The copy platform provides the organization needed to make crucial message design decisions concerning the message objective, and product benefit selection. It also provides an in-depth look at the consumer and thus dictates further execution decisions known as 'creative tactics.'

Execution theories, such as line, symbolism and design principles, influence selecting and developing visual and verbal elements.

The final execution decisions involve the defining of message approach, the writing of copy and headlines and the selection of illustration in a manner which most effectively tells the product/benefit story. Using design principles, layout formats are provided as solutions to various advertising problems. The addition of color serves to enhance message effectiveness.



The ideas presented in this paper are intended to be used for a better understanding of the creative aspect of advertising; the design of effective advertisements. Although many of the ideas are general, it is hoped that they will provide a basis for further inquiry.

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