



So Much Dross

This is part one of a two-part article on how to create effective direct response ads. Part two follows next month...

So much dross...

In every newspaper. In every magazine...

Dross, dross, dross.

And I'm not talking about the news here.

I'm talking about the ads. Dross, wallpaper, whatever you choose to call them.

I call them a criminal waste of money...

A good pal in the U.S - Ray Jutkins - recently shared this with the readers of his highly entertaining and informative ezine...

"Every day each one of us faces 32,000 'eye-flashes'. We are exposed to 570 advertising, marketing, PR and promotional messages. Of these, only 76 are seen or heard and 12 are remembered. What's more, 3 are deemed to be negative.

I would add to those figures, that only 1 out of the 9 we remember positively, do we ever think of acting upon.

Who was it that said the marketing and advertising industry knows what it's doing...?

Whether the numbers are right or not is pretty impossible to say. But that doesn't really matter. The point is well made.

It is absolutely vital that your particular promotional message rises above the general noise level. And gets noticed. And gets read.

Off the page ads are a minefield. There are so many of them, costing the companies concerned a lot of money. Valuable marketing budget.

Incredible sums of money are being wasted every minute of every day.

The reason appears very simple. Most are badly created and badly written. And, surprise, surprise...they won't work...

So, what's going wrong here? And how can you ensure that your next ad works as hard as possible...?

Well, one of the best places to start is by understanding the rules of the game and also the process...

To paraphrase the great George Lois...

"The verbal and visual elements of an ad, should be as indivisible as the words and music of a song"

He's right. Absolutely spot on. But when was the last time you saw such a piece of work. When did you last see an ad that stopped you in your tracks and virtually forced you to read it?

Like this one...

DE SOTO - 1957

This baby can flick its tail at anything on the road!

Take the wheel of a new DeSoto. Pilot her out through traffic, around the open road. Before you know your second course, you'll know this is the most exciting car in the world today.

And here are the eight reasons why:

- New DeSoto drive shaft:** DeSoto presents a new expression that combines precision lines and striking appeal. It gives you an exciting head start from the moment you start to move.
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DE SOTO
... the most exciting car in the world today!

How good is this ad? In my humble opinion, one of the best 3 automotive ads ever created. It's a breathtaking bit of work. The ad just beats you up visually and demands you read it.

When you do, the copy supports and reinforces the image and creates an overwhelming desire. You have to have one of these cars...nothing less will do.

But of course, this was created in an era when people knew what they were doing. They studied the business.

As Drayton once said:

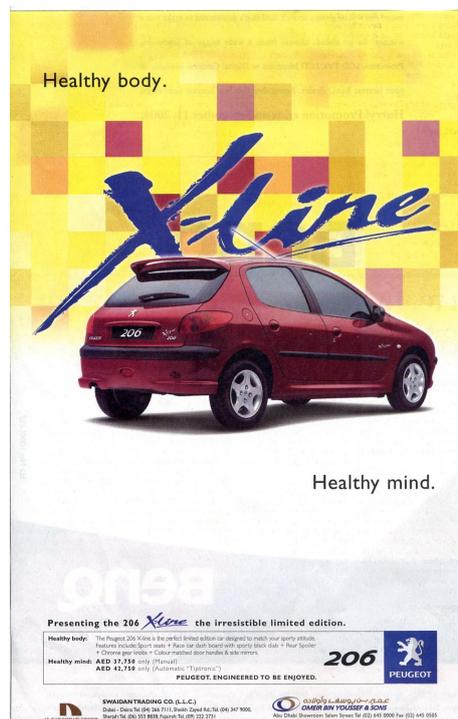
"You can divide advertising and marketing people into two groups. The amateurs and the professionals. The amateurs are in the majority. They aren't students of advertising. They guess. The professionals don't guess, so they don't waste so much of their client's money."

And, when you study the business, good things will result...

The automotive sector astounds me, I have to say. Most of the work I see in print and on TV and hear on the Radio is desperate stuff...

The three ads below represent how so-called creative people today address the same challenge of selling cars. One is from the UK, one from Eastern Europe and one from the Gulf.

PEUGEOT



Healthy body.

X-Line

Healthy mind.

Presenting the 206 *X-Line* the irresistible limited edition.

Healthy body: The Peugeot 206 X-Line is a perfect limited edition car designed to match your sporty attitude.
Features include: Sport seats • Power car dash board with sporty black case • Rear spoiler
• Chrome gear knob • Colour-matched door handles & side mirrors.

Healthy mind: AED 12,718 only (Petrol) **AED 12,718** only (Automatic Transmission).

PEUGEOT ENGINEERED TO BE ENJOYED.

206 PEUGEOT

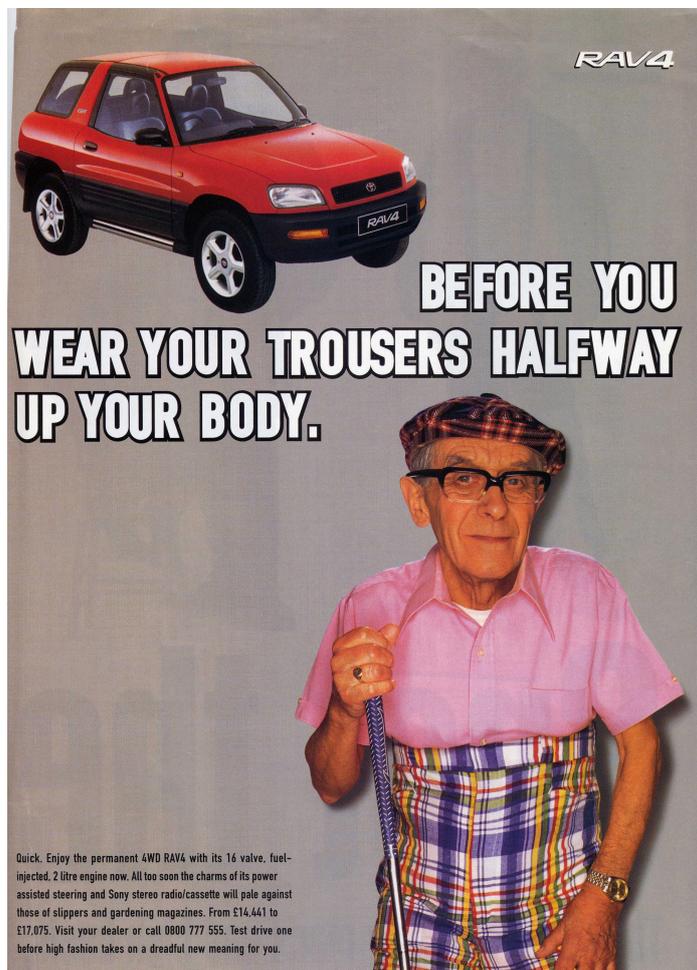
SWADIAN TRADING CO. (L.L.C.)
Dubai - P.O. Box 280 280 210 Sheikh Zayed Rd. Tel: (96) 347 9000.
Doha - Tel: (974) 321 8833 Fax: (974) 321 2721
AL KHAWARIZMI ENERGY

OMER BY TOUGHER & SONS
Riyadh - Tel: (966) 11 491 8988 Fax: (966) 11 491 8988
AL AIN - Tel: (971) 671 722 0000 Fax: (971) 671 722 0044

SUBARU



TOYOTA



I have 20 or 30 just like these. Just as poor. These aren't any better or any worse. Just reflective of the overall tosh that is being put out.

It's really hard to look at garbage like these examples and take these people seriously. It is clear to me that they don't really understand the communication process.

A famous quote comes to mind here...

**"Everything I have seen today, I have seen in the past.
Yet everything I have seen in the past, I have not yet seen today"**

Especially so in the automotive sector, as you can see...

The 3 ads I have shown you are all trying to do the same thing.

Sell motor cars.

The De Soto ad from 1957 did it in large quantities. The other three will not.

The right words are just as vital in off the page ads as in any other approach. The great Joe Sugarman called it *"taking the reader on a mental journey"*

This is how Joe did it in one of his early ads to sell Corvettes...

"Take a ride in the new Corvette. Feel the breeze blowing through your hair as you drive through the warm evening. Watch heads turn. Punch the accelerator to the floor and feel the burst of power that pins you into the back of your contour seat. Look at the beautiful display of electronic technology right on your dashboard. Feel the power and excitement of America's super sports car."

Magnificent. I want one.

You don't see copy like that today in automotive ads do you? It saddens me...

Let's face it. As Herschell Gordon Lewis once said, *"New communications do not fall on virgin soil. They are received by seasoned, sceptical advertising-literate minds."*

You'd better believe it. And those minds are getting more seasoned, more sceptical and more advertising literate by the day.

As a result, the challenge gets harder. People just don't believe anything anymore. So, all of us that ply our trade in the workhouses of contemporary communication better acknowledge this fast.

These days, your targets will have 5 basic objections to your messages. I'd prefer to call them 'massive hurdles'.

- **I don't believe you**
- **I don't need it**
- **I don't have enough time**
- **I don't have enough money**
- **It won't work for me**

These must be recognised and addressed if your ad is to work for you.

Let's draw breath here for a moment. Let's review our objective. What do we want the ad to do?

I believe the ultimate objective of a successful ad is simple:

"To attract, reassure and persuade the reader to exchange his or her hard-earned money in return for the product or service on offer"

But, as we all know, it's a lot easier than it sounds...

Tune in next month and I'll show you how it's done. Plus, I'll provide a whole lot of interesting stuff, including:

- **The 10 elements that make up an ad.**
- **How to write a great headline**
- **20 headlines you can use yourself**
- **Layout tips for maximum readability**
- **How to use AIDCA successfully in ads**
- **4 of the most successful ads ever created**

Keep the faith...



See you next month.

If anyone would like complete copies of any letters reviewed here, please contact Andy direct at andyowen@aol.com or copydeskUK@aol.com

About the Author

Andy Owen is Managing Director of Andy Owen & Associates, a leading International Strategic Marketing Consultancy specialising in all aspects of contemporary direct marketing. The company has offices in UK, Middle East & North Africa, with Associate Offices in Europe & The USA.

The company's corporate website is www.andyowen.co.uk The specialist copy division has its own site at www.copywritingthatsells.com

As well as his International speaking engagements, Andy runs in-house copywriting and direct marketing sessions and workshops for companies and organisations all over the world. If you feel your company could benefit from one of these, please contact Andy for details.

If you would like further information on any aspect of copywriting for direct marketing, please contact Andy direct at andyowen@aol.com or copydeskUK@aol.com

Don't forget to check out Andy's superb new DVD on Copywriting called "*How To Write Copy That Really Sells.*" To find out more and see excerpts from the DVD, visit <http://www.andyowen.co.uk/buy-online.html>