

Good "Write-ups" Beat Good Ads By Drayton Bird



Here's a shameful confession: I thought of offering these ideas before I really knew what they would be.

I know scores that work - and lots that don't - because I've tried them, or know someone who has. But deciding which ones to tell you about, then make them interesting and relevant to you - that's a different kettle of fish.

But I promise you, every single one has worked not once, but many times. They are well worth you thinking about and trying.

Let me remind you of something I said in my last message:

"Turn on your TV any time in the early morning anywhere in the world. You'll see lots of 30 minute or even 60 minute commercials.

You just don't think of them as commercials because they seem like ordinary programmes. They keep running because they make money. Lots of it."

Nobody watches TV for the commercials.

Lots of people actually turn down the sound, switch channels or go and make a cuppa. Revealingly, the greatest single discharge into the US sewage system each year is during the half-time Super Bowl commercials - precious little exercises in creativity that cost over \$3 million for 30 seconds.

If general advertisers depended on getting results for their money, they probably wouldn't buy those spots.

In the same way nobody buys the paper or magazine to read the ads. They want the news and gossip. (And interestingly, John Caples,

whom I have already mentioned, discovered that after benefits, news is what makes people start reading advertisements).

You can draw a simple conclusion from all this. Since people don't like ads, maybe yours should try not to look like one.

Amazingly, this doesn't seem to have occurred to many people. But once you realise and act upon it the results can be astounding.

The late Richard V Benson claimed that an editorial ad will increase readership by 500-600%. You don't need to be an Einstein to realise that the more people read your stuff, the more will reply.

How an editorial style can fool people

Some years ago, I tested editorial-style ads for a retail client - Magnet. People came into the stores and commented on the 'good write ups' they were seeing.

Even one of their directors was fooled. This was although the ads were clearly headed 'Advertisement' - as the publications always insist.

Claude Hopkins said: 'Some advocate large type and big headlines. Yet they do not admire salesmen who talk in loud voices.' 'Others look for something queer and unusual. They want ads distinctive in style or illustration. Would you want that in a salesman?'

'Do nothing to merely interest, amuse or attract. That is not your province. Do only that which wins the people you are after in the cheapest possible way.'

But does that mean all your ads should melt into the background by aping the editorial style? Does it mean

that I am right, and others are wrong? No: it means you must test, and find out what works for you and whatever you sell.

Every time I have tested an editorial style ad, it has improved results - for everything from charities to washing machines - by up to 123%. So I suggest you try it, too.

Last, a gentle reminder and a suggestion. If there's any question you have or something you'd like me to cover, let me know at: <http://askdrayton.com/>

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About the Author

In 2003, the Chartered Institute of Marketing named Drayton Bird one of 50 living individuals who have shaped today's marketing. He has spoken in 53 countries for many organisations, and much of what he discusses derive from his work with many of the world's greatest brands. These include American Express, Audi, Bentley, British Airways, Cisco, Deutsche Post, Ford, IBM, McKinsey, Mercedes, Microsoft, Nestle, Philips, Procter & Gamble, Toyota, Unilever, Visa and Volkswagen. In various capacities - mostly as a writer - Drayton has helped sell everything from Airbus planes to Peppa Pig. His book, *Commonsense Direct and Digital Marketing*, out in 17 languages, has been the UK's best seller on the subject every year since 1982.

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