



HOW TO WRITE A GOOD ADVERTISEMENT

by Victor O. Schwab



Overview

Anyone who's ever read a newspaper or a magazine is bound to remember at least one memorable advertisement they've found within. Just what is it about those ads that draws us in? How can advertisers create something that not only sticks in our heads, but also convinces us to buy what they offer? Using his 44 years (1917-1961) in the advertising business, Victor O. Schwab breaks down what a good ad needs to connect with its readership, from its copy to its layout to the type of accompanying images.

*"The advertisement itself
is the keystone in the arch of sales."*

Introduction

The goal in written advertising is simple: convince people to buy a product. Yet it requires practice to perfect and a bad ad can easily kill a sale. Ads that connects must accomplish these 5 things:

1. Get people's attention.
2. Show them an advantage.
3. Prove it.
4. Persuade readers to grasp this advantage.
5. Ask for action.

Chapter 1. Get Attention

"The attention value of an advertisement is approximately twice as important as the actual convincingness of itself."

-Daniel Starch

Competition is fierce as people constantly avoid ads. One study showed that the average reader looks at only 4 per magazine. You are an uninvited guest in the public's eyes. An enticing headline is half the battle – literally. Many marketers believe at least 50% of the advertisement is the headline. A good headline often contains a "reward" of how your product can fulfill your reader's needs or help them avoid unhappiness.

The next important element is its layout. An exciting, unusual layout will grab a potential customer's attention, but one that is simple yet powerful will also do the trick. Either way, movement and action should be conveyed throughout. Avoid symmetry; it's static and boring. A single large picture can be very effective in getting a person's attention, especially if it shows the product in use. Use contrasts to your advantage (e.g. big/small). Perhaps most importantly, an ad should not look like an ad. It should appear spontaneous and uncalculated, its message sincere and helpful.

Chapter 2. Show People An Advantage

Capturing someone's attention and holding it are two very different things. Customers want to know exactly how your product will benefit them. Put yourself in their shoes and consider what you'd like to see in an ad.

Your advertisement must convey an advantage your product will provide the customer. It should highlight either positive changes (e.g. improved wellbeing, popularity, or financial security), or negative consequences of not buying it (e.g. financial losses, embarrassment, health risks). There are 10 advantages which should be subtly incorporated in the ad:

1. Money and a better job.
2. Security after retirement.
3. Popularity.
4. Praise from others.
5. Increased comfort in everyday life.
6. Social advancement and keeping up with changes.
7. Improved physical appearance.
8. Personal prestige and image.
9. Improved health and lifestyle.
10. Increased overall happiness.

Yet what appeals to consumers can change over time. Ads must adapt by incorporating current trends and fads. As an advertiser, you must make an effort to keep up. Read newspapers and magazines to keep track of current events and opinions. Watch the latest movies

