

THE HISTORY OF ADVERTISING

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Abstract

This article is about what advertising is and what was its history as a form of commercial mass communication way, designed to promote the sale of a product or service and to encourage or persuade. It also includes a brief approach to different periods of advertising history.

Key words: *advertising, history of advertisements.*

Introduction

I believe it is important to understand advertising to appreciate the reasons for advertising's use in a modern industrialized society. Advertising was spawned by a market-driven system and developed in a capitalistic, free enterprise market economy in which mass production utilized advertising as an essential tool.

Urbanization, transportation expansion and communication advancements all facilitated the use and growth of advertising, the result of which is that advertising is firmly entrenched as a business function in different societies with deeply rooted economic and cultural foundations.

Advertising is the result of years of developing in capitalism among its use in mass communication media.

Many authors said that advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor. We can define advertising, as a form of commercial mass communication way, designed to promote the sale of a product or service, or a message on behalf of an institution, organization, or candidate for political office. That implies concepts such as market, publics, sponsors, persuasion, products, services, mass communication, etc.

We can use advertising to encourage or persuade an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to continue or take some new action.

In this essay, we refer a brief history of commercial advertising.

First steps

The history of advertising is connected to humankind evolution and its technical progress. Need of publishing facts and products quality or even required services, is a spontaneous spiritual tendency of trade man.

Investigators said that the first steps of advertising were in Ancient Empires, for example, in Egypt they used papyrus promoting slaves' sales and rewards. In Babylon,

they used dirt splits with inscriptions about salesman, shoemakers and clerks. Greeks used street callers who announced ships' arrival and its cargo of metals, wine and spices.

In the case of Rome, they did something different for instance. They did the first touristic ad¹ of a tavern; in Pompeii a stone wall said "*Traveler, if you go from here to the twelve tower, there Sarinus have a tavern, with this we invite you to come in, bye*"

Also in Rome, an important media was known as *album*, which consisted in a board of blanché wall where they published edicts and laws together with promotions of gladiators' fights and theater representations. Another media was the *libellus*, made with papyrus, a sort of poster which announced possessions sales, shows programs, and the lost of several things.

Painted announces were important too. For example a goat meant milk stores, and bakery could be identified with a mule which has a mill in its back.

Middle Age and the rising of printing press

In Middle Age, together with street callers, appeared brands in products for identifying the maker, giving to them a sign of individuality from a manufacturer from other, allowing to difference, for example, wines and geographical areas such as Osnabrück and Westphalia.

In this period, a big number of people can't read. So, signs that today would say cobbler, miller, tailor or blacksmith would use an image associated with their trade such as a boot, a suit, a hat, a clock, a diamond, a horse shoe, a candle or even a bag of flour.

Gutenberg's printing press (1438) really began the era of mass communication in that now printed materials could be mass produced whereas prior to the printing press, books and other printed materials had to be made individually. A Londoner printed the first English newspaper in 1622 and the first ad appeared in 1625.

That 1622's first newspaper was the *Weekly News*, by Nicholas Brown and Thomas Archer. Other newspapers of this time were the *Mercurius Britannicus*, in 1665 and *La Gazette* from Paris by Théophraste Renaudot in 1630. Those were considered beginners

¹Acronym of advertising

of modern advertising, despite of the fact that the first newspaper's announce appeared in 1650 in the *Several Proceedings in Parliament*; it was about offering a reward for returning twelve stolen horses.

Travelling to Modern Age

In England, line advertisements in newspapers were very popular in the second half of the seventeenth century, often announcing the publication of a new book, or the opening of a new play. The Great Fire of London in 1666 was a boost to this type of advertisement, as people used newspapers in the aftermath of the fire to advertise lost & found, and changes of address. These early line ads were predominantly informative, containing descriptive, rather than persuasive language.

It was around these facts that in 17's century appeared the first law for controlling advertising content because false advertising and so-called "quack" advertisements became a problem.

The first newspaper was published in 1704 in United States (USA). In it pages it promoted itself as a vehicle for advertising. Later, in England, *The Spectator*, by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele published the advertisement of a dentifrice well accepted by nobility and high class.

In USA, appears in 1729 *The Gazette* by Benjamin Franklin, which is considered the true beginning of advertising in that country. That newspaper had advertisements of ships, birds' feathers for writing, wines, books, tobacco, chocolate and other wares. It had so much success, that Franklin is considered a real advertising executive, salesman, publisher and director.

Progressively, newspapers receipted advertisements, sometimes in the internal pages or in the specialized ones.

The 19's, the explosion

Once technological advances enabled the mass production of soap, china, clothing etc., the close personal links between buyer and seller were broken. Rather than selling out

of their back yards to local customers, manufacturers sought market a long way from their factories, sometimes on the other side of the world.

This created a need for advertising. Manufacturers needed to explain and recommend their products to customers whom they would never meet personally. Manufacturers, in chasing far-off markets, were beginning to compete with each other. Therefore they needed to brand their products, in order to distinguish them from one another, and create mass recommendations to support the mass production and consumption model.

Newspapers provided the ideal vehicle for this new phenomenon, advertisements. New technologies were also making newspapers cheaper, more widely available, and more frequently printed. They had more pages, so they could carry more, bigger, ads. Simple descriptions, plus prices, of products served their purpose until the mid nineteenth century, when technological advances meant that illustrations could be added to advertising, and color was also an option. Advertisers started to add copy under the simple headings, describing their products using persuasive prose.

The population doubled from 1870 through 1900 providing an expanded labor force and a new consumer market – the middle class. This growing class was spawned by the economic windfall of regular wages from factory jobs. New modes of communication technology (i.e. telegraph, typewriter, Mergenthaler linotype [automated typesetting] and faster printing presses) increased communication capabilities. Modern magazines developed during the end of the nineteenth century aided by railroad distribution and illiteracy was reduced.

In June 1836, French newspaper *La Presse*, was the first to include paid advertising in its pages, allowing it to lower its price, extend its readership and increase its profitability and the formula was soon copied by all titles.

Around 1840, Volney B. Palmer established the roots of the modern day advertising agency in Philadelphia. In 1842 Palmer bought large amounts of space in various newspapers at a discounted rate then resold the space at higher rates to advertisers.

The actual ad - the copy, layout, and artwork - was still prepared by the company wishing to advertise; in effect, Palmer was a space broker. The situation changed in the late 19th century when the advertising agency of N.W. Ayer & Son was founded. Ayer

and Son offered to plan, create, and execute complete advertising campaigns for its customers.

By 1900 the advertising agency had become the focal point of creative planning, and advertising was firmly established as a profession. Around the same time, in France, Charles-Louis Havas extended the services of his news agency, Havas to include advertisement brokerage, making it the first French group to organize.

At first, agencies were brokers for advertisement space in newspapers. N. W. Ayer & Son was the first full-service agency to assume responsibility for advertising content. N.W. Ayer opened in 1869, and was located in Philadelphia. Around those years, it's known the first advertising plan, created for Gillette (razor blades).

Advertisements acquired character of art, with new esthetical presumptions. It developed the idea of the esthetical function of ads, Toulouse Lautrec, Capiello or Casas did not sales shows or liquors, they rose as artists not publicists, in a new world of announces and posters.

The golden age: Journalism loves Advertising

This was the period of mass press, represented by the *penny press*. The Penny Press was most famous for its low price, a penny per paper. It became popular with the American public because while other papers were priced around six cents, they were able to sell their paper for just a penny. The low price made newspapers and the news available to more than just upper class citizens for the first time.

The labor and lower classes were able to purchase a paper and read the news. As more people began buying papers throughout the country, news and journalism became more important overall.

Newspapers also began paying more attention to the public it served. They were quick to realize that the same information and news that interested the six cent public, did not interest the penny public. Newspapers used information from police stations, criminal courts and divorce courts to fill their paper and make it more appealing to their new public.

The heavy dependence on advertising as a major source of revenue was a main reason that the Penny Press was able to sell papers for a lower price than anyone else. Other papers relied heavily on subscriptions and daily sales. The price of paper and materials used to produce the newspapers also decreased making the production of the newspaper itself less expensive.

A pioneer during the Penny Press era was Benjamin H. Day, founder of the New York Sun. The Sun was the first popular penny paper. The paper's motto, printed at the top of every front page was:

"The object of this paper is to lay before the public, at a price within the means of every one, all the news of the day, and at the same time offer an advantageous medium for advertisements."

The changes made to the newspaper during the Penny Press era set a precedent for the way newspapers operate today. Newspapers rely heavily on advertising as a main source of income and that is also a main reason they are still being offered at relatively low prices today.

Newspapers also pay more attention to their surrounding communities and report of important information more diligently and objectively. Newspapers changed their coverage when they no longer relied so dependently on subscriptions or daily sales to make a profit.

Advertising grows up

Through twentieth century advertising became a full-fledged industry and agencies developed. It is important to contextualize these ads as they were created during a period of rapid urbanization, massive immigration, labor unrest, concerns over the abuses of capitalism, the first feminist movement (suffrage), motion pictures and mass culture.

By 1914 the Federal Trade Commission was enacted to prevent deception in advertising as well as protecting one business owner from the unscrupulous behavior of another. "Unfair methods of doing business are...illegal." Also in 1914 the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) was established to verify circulation claims. Prior to the ABC,

publications calculated their own circulation rates obviously creating circulation figures to suit their own needs. Once the ABC was established as an independent agent, these figures became standardized and accurate. In fact, the ABC can estimate figures such as pass-along-readers for print.

In 1916, the advertisers themselves established the Better Business Bureau as a self-regulatory committee.

Advertisers formed other organizations to improve the effectiveness of advertising such as the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 1917. The 4 A's remains the most comprehensive organization with the majority of agencies as members.

During World War I advertising became an instrument of direct social interaction and was utilized to arouse the public regarding war-related issues and the sale of war bonds. The power to persuade through this electronic mass medium was realized.

Following the war, the "roaring 20s" were prosperous. The Victorian age was over and the great social experiment in the joys of consumption began. Modesty gave way to sexuality and the love of the modern. Advertising encouraged the consumer to enjoy life and consumption was not only respectable, but expected. The citizen became the "consumer" and advertising instructed the consumer as to how to be modern and avoid the pitfalls of this new age (i.e., Listerine mouthwash taught customers about "halitosis" and Lifebuoy soap instructed about avoiding body odor).

Products were developed to cure almost every social anxiety and personal failure. Other ads emphasized themes of modernity (i.e. public work space was the domain of the male while the private space of home became female). Ads became more visual with less copy and showed social lessons in a social tableau (slice-of-life) that instructed on how to fit in, how to be modern.

Truck building factories from the war were retooled from military to commercial and the ages of transporting by truck was born. Trucking allowed for door-to-door delivery which in turn spurred the growth of chain stores and supermarkets. Bruce Barton, one of the founders of the large agency BBDO, was the author of a best selling 1924 book *The Man Nobody Knows* that portrayed Jesus as the archetypal ad man. He blended Christian and capitalist principles which were a very attractive mix to a people

struggling to reconcile the traditional religious dogma, which preached against excess, with the new religion of consumption.

The emergence of radio as a significant advertising medium, remained dominant until the 1950s. This created a new sense of community as people separated by thousands of miles experienced the same programming (i.e., the first presidential address was broadcast in 1923 by President Coolidge and the first football broadcast in 1927). In 1927 the Federal Radio Commission (now the Federal Communication Commission) was created.

During the first years of twentieth decade, advertising turned more sophisticated and technical. Started the use of radio, with the first commercial radio diffusor WEA, in 1922 and the presentation of the first radial program sponsoring by “Eveready (prepared by N. W. Ayer). It showed new possibilities for advertising evolution, complemented with the treatment for halitosis Listerine, Pepsodent, cars advertisements, the use of movies stars for Lux Soap, and the impulse of women’s cigarette consumption for Lucky Strike.

The crisis in thirtieth decade made people to turn to the debate about advertising tendency of creating consumerism, allowing the appearance of new legislations about products and honesty of ads bounded with announcers’ credibility.

By the mid-1930s, the 'hard sell' had become commonplace, with sex, violence and threats creeping into ads. Items were marketed as necessities, rather than luxuries, with items like hats or mouthwash positioned as vital tools in the battle to get, and stay, ahead. Rather than reassuring consumers, ads bullied and hustled, playing on fears in order to attach their target audience's sparse disposable income to their brand.

One agency that thrived during the Depression was Young & Rubicam. They focused on research and facts, investigating the impact of successful and failed campaigns. In 1932, agency head Raymond Rubicam hired an academic named George Gallup as the first ever market research director in ad land. Gallup developed a lot of the techniques still used today to find out which ads work and why - questionnaires, focus groups, listeners' panels - as well as devising audience measurement techniques (the coincidental method for radio, and the impact method for print and TV).

World War II turned the economy around with the production of war goods. The Congress established the War Advertising Council to mobilize the nation for war, juxtaposing advertising with the war effort and this positioning to some degree rehabilitated the tarnished image of advertising.

During the war, American government created the War Advertising Council, with the purpose of recruiting civil help. This council was composed by several media, advertising agencies, creative consultant and publicists. The council invested in this project almost one hundred billion dollars.

After the war, the council changed its name to Advertising Council, this one still working. In this period the industry had started supplying the growing needs of cars, houses, electrical issues and other products.

During this period advertisements were characterized by scenes of modernity, social promise and the attributes of science and technology. It's allowed the development of next decades.

Growth was the motto

In the early 1950s, the DuMont Television Network began the modern practice of selling advertisement time to multiple sponsors. Previously, DuMont had trouble finding sponsors for many of their programs and compensated by selling smaller blocks of advertising time to several businesses. This eventually became the standard for the commercial television industry in the United States. However, it was still a common practice to have single sponsor shows, such as The United States Steel Hour. In some instances the sponsors exercised great control over the content of the show—up to and including having one's advertising agency actually writing the show. The single sponsor model is much less prevalent now, a notable exception being the Hallmark Hall of Fame.

It is interesting to note that during 1960s advertising was slow to reflect the social revolution in progress (the era of the hippies). The industry was predominately white and male with minorities and women in subservient roles. Visually however, there was a “creative revolution” in that ads became minimalist and graphic.

In this period, campaigns featuring heavy spending in different mass media channels became more prominent. For example, the Esso Gasoline Company spent hundreds of millions of dollars on a brand awareness campaign built around the simple and alliterative theme Put a Tiger in Your Tank. Psychologist Ernest Dichter and DDB Worldwide copywriter Sandy Sulzer learned that motorists desired both power and play while driving, and chose the tiger as an easy-to-remember symbol to communicate those feelings. The North American and later European campaign featured extensive television and radio and magazine ads, including photos with tiger tails supposedly emerging from car gas tanks, promotional events featuring real tigers, billboards, and in Europe station pump hoses "wrapped in tiger stripes" as well as pop music songs. Tiger imagery can still be seen on the pumps of successor firm ExxonMobil.

After World War II, major American agencies were on the move again — typically driven by their clients at home who wanted to do effective marketing of their products in foreign settings. Not only in Latin America but also in Australasia, South Africa, Western Europe, and the Middle East, American agencies opened branch offices. Top managers were frequently Americans, but copywriters, artists, and most other staff members were locals. This trend has continued and now involves more agencies and countries (for example, Russia, Eastern Europe, and sub-Saharan countries). Corporate mergers of the 1980s and 1990s resulted in some mega-agencies, all of whom operate international and domestic offices to service their clients.

The push-and-pull of agency-client relations in the international arena has continually focused on the option of using the same ad everywhere (with only minor adjustments such as language spoken) versus the benefits of adjusting, even rethinking, strategies to better fit local customs and practices. Today markets cross national borders and international advertising is commonplace. Some corporations have used their advertising to create truly global brands — products whose identities bridge cultural and linguistic gaps on a wide scale. Coca-Cola, McDonald's, and Sony are examples.

By the 1970s and the end of the Viet Nam war, the reelection of Richard Nixon, and Kent State advertisements began to represent minorities and women were presented in professional roles. Concern began to be voiced as to the effect of advertising on children. Newer, tougher regulator offices were developed to demand higher standards. Advertising judged to be misleading included Listerine mouthwash which claimed it

could prevent and cure colds, Campbell soups for putting marbles in the bottom of the bowl to bolster the look of the ingredients, and Anacin for claiming it could relieve tension.

Control within the agencies shifted from the creative department to the account managers, a change indicating the emphasis from creative executions to more effective business practices. Companies consolidated and companies such as Proctor & Gamble and Phillip Morris became umbrellas for dozens of separate brands. The media also consolidated as with the Turner Empire of networks and Gannet papers.

From the 1970s through the 1980s a fragmentation occurred within the economy. This was due to numerous factors including: a. the growth in communication technologies with cable offering options such as ESPN, CNN, and Nickelodeon, and technologies such as the VCR, laser disks, specialized magazines and direct mail; b. audience fragmentation where there was no longer a traditional mass market. Advertisers began to identify markets by demographics and users of products. Television split into hundreds of channels where as once there had only been 3 networks. Magazines began to be published that tailored to special interests and newspapers added freestanding inserts so readers could choose what they wanted to read; and c. direct response advertising grew while data processing systems developed.

The beginning of “merger mania” in the early 1980s saw most major US agencies merge with one another as well as foreign agencies entering the US market. The impact on the creative was that of departmentalizing accounts (to keep clients that may be in the same product category, offices were designated as handling one or the other but never both so as not to compromise the security of the client’s work) and adding an international flavor to the creative.

The 1980s were also a time of conservatism with the election of Ronald Reagan and the reaffirmation of family and country. It was also the age of the infomercial that was made possible in 1984 when the FCC rescinded regulations limiting advertising to 16 minutes per house. An infomercial was a long advertisement that looked like a talk show or demo and initially aired in late night slots with small audience. They later spread to other time slots with larger audiences and created new ethical issues due to the fact that they appeared to be news programming verses paid advertising.

Today the era of ad-supported television programming is over and there is a need for advertisers to reinvent the process to fit the new ways of reaching audience members. With VCRs, TiVo and cable systems the viewer has the option of deleting advertising messages. Viewers are also able to utilize cable systems for on-line services such as shopping on either TV or the net. Changes in advertising will affect the way in which it is prepared and delivered to target audiences (interactively) and major advertisers are participating in integrated programming to better control the content of new media where viewers can interact with programming to get further information.

Other changes include a change in the concept of power in the distribution channel with mega retailers such as Wal-Mart gaining power away from the manufacturers. Value pricing is attractive to customers and retailers are now wresting power from the manufacturers who have a difficult time getting consumers to demand their products when the retailer has the power base. Private label brands are also developing to compete with national brands and offer lower prices.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the introduction of cable television and particularly MTV. Pioneering the concept of the music video, MTV ushered in a new type of advertising: the consumer tunes in for the advertising message, rather than it being a by-product or afterthought. As cable and satellite television became increasingly prevalent, specialty channels emerged, including channels entirely devoted to advertising, such as QVC, Home Shopping Network, and ShopTV Canada.

With the advent of the ad server, marketing through the Internet opened new frontiers for advertisers and contributed to the "dot-com" boom of the 1990s. Entire corporations operated solely on advertising revenue, offering everything from coupons to free Internet access. At the turn of the 21st century, a number of websites including the search engine Google, started a change in online advertising by emphasizing contextually relevant, unobtrusive ads intended to help, rather than inundate, users. This has led to a plethora of similar efforts and an increasing trend of interactive advertising.

The share of advertising spending relative to GDP has changed little across large changes in media. For example, in the US in 1925, the main advertising media were newspapers, magazines, signs on streetcars, and outdoor posters. Advertising spending as a share of GDP was about 2.9 percent. By 1998, television and radio had become

major advertising media. Nonetheless, advertising spending as a share of GDP was slightly lower—about 2.4 percent.

A recent advertising innovation is "guerrilla marketing", which involve unusual approaches such as staged encounters in public places, giveaways of products such as cars that are covered with brand messages, and interactive advertising where the viewer can respond to become part of the advertising message. Guerrilla advertising is becoming increasingly more popular with a lot of companies. This type of advertising is unpredictable and innovative, which causes consumers to buy the product or idea. This reflects an increasing trend of interactive and "embedded" ads, such as via product placement, having consumers vote through text messages, and various innovations utilizing social network services such as Facebook.

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