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A LESSON IN ADVERTISING FROM THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By Patrick Quinn

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Back in the 1760s, the great Dr Samuel Johnson delivered himself of the dictum that 'promise, large promise is the soul of advertising'. It's a good thought, a great thought; and I contend that what was true then is equally true today. But it seems to me that modern advertisers are tying themselves into unnecessary knots in an attempt to reach audiences which they believe are becoming increasingly indifferent to their blandishments.

Well, yes, markets are turning deaf ears and blind eyes, but they always have done, though not for the reasons generally espoused by the world's marketers. I am convinced that despite all the sophisticated research and marketing effort that goes into advertising these days, the real reason that markets are indifferent to advertising is because much of it ignores the many splendoured principle that people don't buy products, they buy the benefits of owning those products.

Today, the great proportion of advertisers don't deliver sales messages, they tell what they hope are emotive stories with which the market can empathise, then they drop the product in as an afterthought, hoping that enough emotional cross-communication has been achieved for people to reach for their credit cards. That it doesn't and people won't has resulted in huge advertising budget cut-backs in the developed world in recent years. Only a manufacturer who has taken leave of his senses will throw even more money at a strategy that doesn't work.

The strategy responsible operates under the title Emotional Sales Proposition (ESP), thought in some quarters to be an advance on

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the Unique Sales Proposition (USP) which, on the contrary, does actually work. What has been overlooked or, more likely, ignored, is that in developing the principle of the USP in the late 1950s, the brilliant Rosser Reeves was striving to replace an advertising strategy that had been in situ for 30 or so years and was fast running out of steam. What was the device he was hoping to supersede? Well, by any other name, it was the emotional sales proposition. I won't bore you with the detail, but if you'd like to find out more, you should lay your hands on Reeves' book, *Reality in Advertising* (MacGibbon & Kee – 1961). It could be an eye-opener.

So, it's true – the one thing we learn from history is that we never learn anything from history. Let's go back to Dr Johnson. It's worth remembering that the kind of advertising old Sam was talking about in the 18th century was fairly innocuous and largely unexceptionable. It could be read in coffee-house flyers, in chapbooks and in rudimentary newspapers; and it consisted of sales messages as diverse as where to get your wig powdered and the date of the next public hanging at Tyburn. Even so, the products and services on offer were as important to the people of the time as mobile phones and computers are to us.

In the human condition, nothing much changes. Our egos still need to be massaged and we are all in hot pursuit of happiness. Only our methods for achieving these goals, only our technologies, vary with time.

So the next time you are tempted to commit advertising, think about Sam Johnson and give your market a reason for owning your product. A good reason.

Which prompts me to suggest a visit to www.wordpower3.com. There, you'll find an e-book that could make your working life a whole lot easier. It contains close to 200 ready-made headlines, taglines, copy openers and clinchers, plus a comprehensive theme-finder that will give you just about every promotional word and phrase you'll ever need.

It's called Word Power III. Over the years, its content has helped me make a lot of money. What it has done for me, it can do for you. And that's a large promise.

Patrick Quinn is a copywriter, with 40 years' experience of the advertising business in London, Dublin, Edinburgh and Miami. Over the years, he has helped win for his clients just about every advertising

award worth winning His published books, include: The Secrets of Successful Copywriting. The Secrets of Successful Low Budget Advertising. The Secrets of Successful Exhibitions. Word Power.

Hardwood Floors For Interior Design And For Home Decorating

By Matthew Anderson

Using hardwood floors for interior design and for home decorating, based on furniture of the eighteenth century may be discussed from different points of view. However, what most people realize is the distinguish details of tables made from that century. Dinner and wine tables were some of those pieces of furniture that could add a different touch of class to your interior decorating. Learn from the history of furniture book, by Frederick Litchfield ideas on how 18th century furniture, from the earliest to the present time.

To the latter part of the eighteenth century the English furniture of which time has been discussed on the site belong the quaint little "urn stands" which were made to hold the urn with boiling water, while the tea pot was placed on the little slide which is drawn out from underneath the table top. In those days tea was an expensive luxury, and the urn stand, of which there is an illustration, inlaid in the fashion of the time, is a dainty relic of the past, together with the old mahogany or marqueterie tea caddy, which was sometimes the object of considerable skill and care. They were fitted with two and sometimes three bottles or tea-pays of silver or Battersea enamel, to hold the black and green teas, and when really good examples of these daintily-fitted tea caddies are offered for sale, they bring large sums.

Eighteenth Century Wine Tables

The wine table of this time deserves a word. These are now somewhat rare, and are only to be found in a few old houses, and in some of the Colleges at Oxford and Cambridge. These were found with revolving tops, which had circles turned out to a slight depth for each glass to stand in, and they were sometimes shaped like the half of a flat ring. These latter were for placing in front of the fire, when the outer side of the table formed a convivial circle, round which the sitters gathered after they had left the dinner table.

One of these old tables is still to be seen in the Hall of Gray's Inn, and the writer was told that its fellow was broken and had been "sent away." They are nearly always of good rich mahogany, and have legs more or less ornamental according to circumstances.

A distinguishing feature of English furniture of the last century was the partiality for secret drawers and contrivances for hiding away papers or valued articles; and in old secretaries and writing tables we find a great many ingenious designs which remind us of the days when there were but few banks, and people kept money and deeds in their own custody.

Matthew Anderson contributes adding articles to

.Your guide

on home decorating and how to choose from hundreds of decorating ideas and tips. Matthew will inspire you to capture the look you want for your flooring. Reach more info in hardwood floors at



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