

Pumping Up The Emotional Side Of Gizmos, Widgets And Powdered Eggs.

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By Walter Burek

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Conventional wisdom has it that business-to-business advertising must be jam-packed with facts. But today, the facts are not enough.

All advertising copy consists of two elements: What is said and how it's said. What is said is the rational part of the message — the claims and benefits that result from careful positioning and strategy. How it's said is the emotional element — the look of the advertising, and the charm, humor, nostalgia, empathy, sense of security, beauty, or sense of style and quality that is conveyed.

Knowing when and how to use emotion is the most important part of a copywriter's and art director's job. Because, whether we like to admit it or not, most purchase decisions — greeting card or giant machinery, new car or new factory roof — are made for emotional, not rational, reasons.

A Couple Of Definitions.

We've been told that emotion is probably best defined by the observation that emotions are feelings. How important is that? Very. Because feelings are everything in people's lives. They dictate where we live, who we live with, who our friends are, what we read, what we eat, what we drive, where we go on vacation, what we laugh at, what we cry about and what we want out of life. And they tell us what to buy, when to buy, where to buy, and who to buy from.

We've also been told that a definition of communication is the interchange of ideas between two people. But, in advertising, we have to go beyond that. Our business must be the interchange of feelings between two people. We have to make people really feel something about the products and companies we advertise. Otherwise, they won't buy. And if they don't buy, we've failed. So, the simple truth of the matter is: The only advertising that works is advertising that makes somebody feel

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something.

Four Thoughts, No Rules.

Explaining how to use emotion in advertising is difficult, if not impossible. It all depends on the situation and the abilities of the people involved. But here are some things that may help put the subject in perspective.

Businessmen And–Women Are People, Too.

Some will argue, especially in today's downsized work environment, that the businessperson is besieged, harried and overworked. And all they have time for is the facts. True, perhaps. But it is also true that they are being constantly being bombarded with information at every turn. Which means that if your advertising is going to be successful — if it is going to stand out from the clutter — you better

deliver it in an emotional envelope. Whether you're a man or woman, working man or working woman, prudent veteran, or a kid just out of school isn't important. Emotional advertising has a universal kind of communication that works. Warmth, humor, charm, flair — these are things we all relate to, respond to. Emotional advertising transcends the demographic position of the reader or viewer. People in all walks of life respond to wit, to being talked to in a flattering and friendly way, to being liked. People like advertising that makes them feel good — about your product, about your company, about themselves.

Start From The Other End.

All advertising must start with a strategy. But, too often, we build our strategies on the what. With too little consideration of potential emotional appeals. And too much focus on the specific product differences and benefits, no matter how small these differences might be. We get locked into saying something instead of communicating something. It would be better if we spent more time trying to understand how people might use the product in their lives. And trying to judge its emotional importance and appeal. Which means that, sometimes, you may want to start at the other end. By first coming up with a great attention–getting idea — that you can then fit into the framework of the strategy.

Don't Go Too Far.

Don't get the wrong idea. The rational appeal of your advertising is important, too. Especially when you have something significant to say. But even when you don't. Because the rational element is what people use to justify their emotional decisions. Nobody will ever say, "I bought their product because the photos in their brochure were beautiful," or "I gave them the business because the copy on their Web site gave me a chuckle." Even though stuff like this may have affected them, they still need a rational reason. So, you better give them one.

Rely On Your Own Feelings.

If you put anything on paper without emotion, it should be because you're in search of it. You have to start with emotion, if you want to end with it. Remember, the whole idea here is to share your feelings (and the intensity of them) — about a company and its product or services — with the people on the other side of that page or screen. It means forging those feelings into the shape of ads, brochures, Web pages, postcards and matchbook covers for all of the rest of the world to feel. And just think about it! Every time a person will reach for a product, it's because you have reached them inside. And given them a feeling for it. Which makes for a pretty good feeling in itself.

Walter is a professional advertising copywriter who writes, edits and publishes "Words @ Work", a FREE bimonthly newsletter of advice and information about writing that works. To view his award-winning portfolio and to subscribe visit www.walterburek.com. You may also subscribe to Words@Work via e-mail to: walter@walterburek.com

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Walter Burek is an award-winning copywriter who learned his craft at some of the finest advertising agencies in the world and has been a writer and Creative Director on some of advertising's most important accounts. Currently, he offers freelance copywriting services through his company, WalterBurek.com. Walter also writes, edits and publishes Words@Work, a free newsletter for marketing communications professionals.

How to Make Goopy Grits Cake

By Kori Puckett

I was intrigued when I came across this unusual dessert recipe. Now, ordinarily, I wouldn't think that a dessert containing grits, of all things, would be appealing. But there was a time when I thought rice was a funny choice, too, and I'm now a huge fan of rice pudding.

So needless to say, I tried it and surprisingly it wasn't bad. In fact, it was sweet...maybe a little too sweet for some people, but I don't mind.

Here it is:

Grits Cake 1 yellow cake mix 4 eggs 1/2 cup melted butter 1 cup grits 8 oz. pack cream cheese 16 oz. powdered sugar 1 tsp. vanilla

Preheat over 350 degrees fahrenheit (careful here, ovens may vary. Mine does, a lot!). Mix cake, 2 eggs, butter, and grits in a bowl.

Mix cream cheese, powdered sugar, 2 eggs, and vanilla until smooth and creamy.

Spread first mixture into a 9 x 13 pan. Pour second mixture over cake batter, then bake for 35-45 minutes (once again, ovens may vary).

The top of the cake should be goopy. If you give this dessert recipe a try, I'd love to know what you think about it!

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