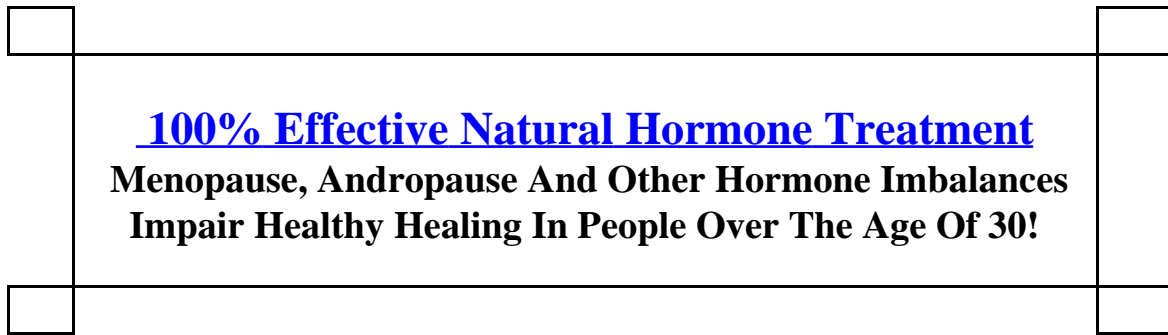


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Scientific Advertising (is) for Dummies

By Linda Cox

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Perhaps the most revered of all marketing books is "Scientific Advertising" by Claude C. Hopkins. And why not? It's been dampening enthusiasm, mauling budgets and scuttling good ideas for nearly a century.

"Sacrilige!" I hear you cry. "'Scientific Advertising' is the bible of modern advertising! Claude C. Hopkins is the founding father of modern marketing!"

Yeah, yeah, yeah...

The main point of the book "Scientific Advertising" is that in advertising, Testing Is Good, which raises an important question:

Is testing good?

Interestingly, no.

More accurately, no.

Well, okay, yes.

But not really.

Out in the real world, and here in cyberspace as well, testing is a dream that quickly plummets into night terrors. By conservative estimates, 80% of (costly) advertising tests yield no usable or useful information whatsoever.

Typically, frustrated bosses first stumble on Claude's book and wave it around like a talisman to ward off artsy and unquantifiable marketing voodoo. That's how it starts. Next comes a meeting where the unwashed staff is introduced to the blindingly luminous (though currently idle) mind of Claude C.

Hopkins.

This is when marketers groan. They know what's coming and they know it's gonna be ugly. The boss has had an epiphany. The clouds have parted and Claude has shined down upon him: Testing is the Golden Key! Testing will Set Us Free! Testing will Unlock the Vaults of Heaven!

Testing RULES!

For the marketers, this is a no-win situation at every level. First, testing is a drag. Second, it's stupid. Third, it's dumb. Fourth, it doesn't work. Fifth, when it works, it doesn't matter.

Before you left-brainers and accountants out there get all flippy-dinkled, let me point out that there are exceptions where it does work and where it does make sense.

Say, for instance, you're running a direct mail campaign, sending out a million pieces a week to an AARP list to yank on the heartstrings of old people and get them to send in donations they can't afford, two cents on every dollar of which actually makes it through to buy beepers for grotesquely impoverished but aching photogenic children somewhere arid.

One of your copywriters will hemorrhage messily if the headline above the picture of the distended-bellied little village boy too weak from hunger to blink flies off his own eyeballs isn't "Hey, old person! How can you let this go?!?" Another copywriter will open fire on the secretarial staff if the headline isn't "Hey, old person! How can you let this happen?!?"

Your problem, unless you're looking for some turnover in the secretarial pool, is which headline to go with. So, you run a test. With all other factors being absolutely, gruelingly, microscopically equal, and with some completely automated, totally foolproof, exhaustively planned tracking method in place, you send 500,000 with one headline and 500,000 with the other.

The result? You'll never know. The list guy bonked and sent one headline to New York and the other to Fiji. The computer guy bonked because it's part of his job description, so Data Entry had to handle tracking. Data Entry didn't bonk, they just stared at their shoes while you explained tracking and didn't do it.

The numbers you do get, however, paint a remarkably clear picture:

Testing is dumb.

So, how about the little guy? The guy whose budget doesn't have room for wildly improbable, hugely inaccurate, utterly useless extravagances like testing a free car deodorizer against a free closet deodorizer?

Here are a few suggestions:

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1. Guess. That may not sound very scientific, but marketing is really more art than science anyway.
2. Don't reinvent the wheel. Unless your product or industry just emerged, you probably have vast archives of previous marketing successes and failures to analyze for free.
3. Train your ear. Develop a sense of pitch that tells you when any element of your marketing is off-key.
4. Try, try again.

On the net, keying your links, watching your stats, and borrowing liberally from the competition is all most of us really need.

Yes. "Scientific Advertising" is a great book and a must-read. So is the Old Testament, but that doesn't mean we should all rush out and stone the wicked.

(Unless, of course, they're passionately expounding the virtues of boring marketing books written by dead marketing guys.)

Learn It All With Books For Dummies

By George Johnson

There are a bundle of books for dummies within your reach these days. In fact, you can take a stroll through any Barnes & Noble and probably locate the one you're looking for. These helpful texts give the beginner a decent introduction and overall knowledge of a specific subject. Books for dummies can be beneficial to people of all ages.

Have you ever been in that situation where you simply had no idea what you were doing? Well, if that sounds all too familiar, don't fret; there are a number of great books for dummies that can help you out. Don't get me wrong; I'm not taking a shot at your IQ, but merely suggesting a decent solution.

Back when I was new to the whole husband gig, I unfortunately wasn't much of a cook. No worries, I browsed the local bookstore and found a plethora of cooking books. Now, as opposed to going with some of the more expensive/gourmet ones, I settled for a nice cooking book for dummies.

This simple, yet handy text introduced me to the world of cooking in a rather attainable fashion. I definitely didn't need an extensive chef vocabulary to get the gist of it. Another occasion I took advantage of books for dummies was when I was interested in automobiles.

Sure, you may like cars, but do you know how they truly work, and how you can fix them? I've noticed that most people can't even change their own oil. If you think about it, that's kind of sad. We need to take advantage of our infinite resources these days and better understand things on our own. This

obliterates the possibility of being duped most of the time.

Are you in search of books for dummies? Maybe you want to learn about Tae Kwon Do, or how to write better. There are a variety of great books for dummies online. Check out what's available from the comfort of your own home. A great site to explore books for dummies is Amazon.

This web store carries many books for dummies regarding various topics. It really doesn't matter what you wish you gain knowledge of. Check out books on yoga, or possibly even golf. You will surely find books for dummies that can help you. Hey, we all can't be experts on everything. However, there's no reason why you can't acquire some additional knowledge with books for dummies.

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Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!