# Twitter Thread by Chris Hladczuk



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## David Ogilvy is the King of Copywriting.

## And in 1982 he writes a 38 lesson manifesto titled

## "How to create advertising that sells"

## Here are the top 7 tips that you can use today:

We Make the Wrong Promise

A promise is not a random claim or stupid slogan.

It is a benefit for the consumer.

And the product delivers that benefit.

Awards are Dumb

"Pursuing creative awards seduces creative people from pursuing sales."

Translation:

If your job is to sell, focus 100% of your energy on selling the product.

Not selling yourself to voters to win an award.

"Nobody was ever bored into buying a product."

Give it some magic and charm.

The iPhone vs. Blackberry is a modern example:

https://t.co/vN8KIJ5T6g

> Steve Jobs killed BlackBerry.
>
> By creating a cult and inventing new rules
>
> Here's the breakdown and why it matters\U0001f447
>
> — Chris Hladczuk (@chrishlad) December 7, 2021

Hit the Headline

"On average, 5 times as many people read the headline vs. the body."

People are scared of writing clickbait titles.

But the truth is that clickbait exists only when you fail to keep your promise to the reader.

h/t @nicolascole77

Long Writing Works

"The more you tell, the more you sell."

Readership falls off at 50 words.

But barely drops between 50 and 500 words.

Just like you will binge 20 hours of a great Netflix show, we read long writing as long as it delivers.

The Brand Image

95% of all advertising has no consistent theme year over year.

People are the same way.

We jump from thing to thing endlessly in search of our "passion".

What if you just focused 100% of your energy on ONE thing this year?

Double Down on Winners

"The best ads get discarded right when they start to pay off."

The best investments get sold too early.

If it works, make sure there is a clear reason to stop.

Don't let our never ending search for novelty win.

If you picked up a new insight, retweet the first tweet to teach a friend:
https://t.co/ObrTLOce1x

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> — Chris Hladczuk (@chrishlad) January 15, 2022

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https://t.co/Zr6gAK3oP0

You can also check out all 38 lessons here!

# How to create advertising that sells

## by David Ogilvy

**Ogilvy & Mather has created over $1,480,000,000 worth of advertising, and spent $4,900,000 tracking the results.**

**Here, with all the dogmatism of brevity, are 38 of the things we have learned.**

**1. The most important decision.** We have learned that the effect of your advertising on your sales depends more on this decision than on any other: *How should you position your product?*

Should you position SCHWEPPES as a soft drink—or as a mixer?

Should you position DOVE as a product for dry skin or as a product which gets hands really clean?

The results of your campaign depend less on how we write your advertising than on how your product is positioned. It follows that positioning should be decided before the advertising is created.

Research can help. Look before you leap.

**2. Large promise.** The second most important decision is this: what should you promise the customer? A promise is not a claim, or a theme, or a slogan. It is a *benefit for the consumer.*

It pays to promise a benefit which is unique and competitive. And the product must *deliver* the benefit you promise.

Most advertising promises *nothing.* It is doomed to fail in the marketplace.

"Promise, large promise, is the soul of an advertisement"—said Samuel Johnson.

**3. Brand image.** Every advertisement should contribute to the complex symbol which is the brand image. Ninety-five percent of all advertising is created *ad hoc.* Most products lack any consistent image from one year to another.

The manufacturer who dedicates his advertising to building the most sharply defined personality for his brand gets the largest share of the market.

**4. Big ideas.** Unless your advertising is built on a BIG IDEA it will pass like a ship in the night.

It takes a BIG IDEA to jolt the consumer out of his indifference—to make him *notice* your advertising, *remember* it and *take action.*

Big ideas are usually *simple* ideas. Said Charles Kettering, the great General Motors inventor: "This problem, when solved, will be simple."

BIG SIMPLE IDEAS are not easy to come by. They require genius—and midnight oil. A truly big one can be continued for twenty years—like our Eyepatch for Hathaway shirts.

**5. A first-class ticket.** It pays to give most products an image of quality—a first-class ticket.

Ogilvy & Mather has been conspicuously successful in doing this—for Pepperidge, Hathaway, Mercedes-Benz, Schweppes, Dove and others.

If your advertising looks ugly, consumers will conclude that your product is shoddy, and they will be less likely to buy it.

**6. Don't be a bore.** Nobody was ever *bored* into buying a product. Yet most advertising is impersonal, detached, cold—and dull.

It pays to *involve* the customer.

Talk to her like a human being. Charm her. Make her hungry. Get her to participate.

**7. Innovate.** Start trends—instead of following them. Advertising which follows a fashionable fad, or is imitative, is seldom successful.

It pays to *innovate,* to blaze new trails.

But innovation is risky unless you pretest your innovation with consumers. Look before you leap.

**8. Be suspicious of awards.** The pursuit of creative awards seduces creative people from the pursuit of sales.

We have been unable to establish any correlation whatever between awards and sales.

At Ogilvy & Mather we now give an annual award for the campaign which contributes the most to *sales.*

Successful advertising sells the product without drawing attention to itself. It rivets the consumer's attention on the *product.*

Make the product the hero of your advertising.

**9. Psychological segmentation.** Any good agency knows how to position products for *demographic* segments of the market—for men, for young children, for farmers in the South, etc.

But Ogilvy & Mather has learned that it often pays to position products for *psychological* segments of the market.

Our Mercedes-Benz advertising is positioned to fit nonconformists who scoff at "status symbols" and reject flimflam appeals to snobbery.

**10. Don't bury news.** It is easier to interest the consumer in a product when it is *new* than at any other point in its life. Many copywriters have a fatal instinct for burying news. This is why most advertising for new products fails to exploit the opportunity that genuine news provides.

It pays to launch your new product with a loud BOOM-BOOM.

**11. Go the whole hog.** Most advertising campaigns are too complicated. They reflect a long list of marketing objectives. They embrace the divergent views of too many executives. By attempting too many things, they achieve nothing.

It pays to boil down your strategy to one simple promise—and go the whole hog in delivering that promise.

### What works best in television

**12. Testimonials: Avoid irrelevant celebrities.** Testimonial commercials are almost always successful—if you make them credible.

Either celebrities or real people can be effective. But avoid *irrelevant* celebrities whose fame has no natural connection with your product or your customers. Irrelevant celebrities steal attention from your product.

**13. Problem-solution (don't cheat!)** You set up a problem that the consumer recognizes.

Then you show how your product can solve that problem.

And you prove the solution.

This technique has always been above average in sales results, and it still is. But don't use it unless you can do so *without cheating;* the consumer isn't a moron, she is your wife.

**14. Visual demonstrations.** If they are honest, visual demonstrations are generally effective in the marketplace.

It pays to *visualize your promise.* It saves time. It drives the promise home. It is memorable.

**15. Slice of life.** These playlets are corny, and most copywriters detest them. But they have sold a lot of merchandise, and are still selling.

**16. Avoid logorrhea.** Make your *pictures* tell the story. What you show is more important than what you say.

Many commercials drown the viewer in a torrent of words. We call that logorrhea (rhymes with diarrhea).

We have created some great commercials *without* words.

**17. On-camera voice.** Commercials using on-camera voice do significantly better than commercials using voice-over.

**18. Musical backgrounds.** Most commercials use musical backgrounds. However, on the average, musical backgrounds reduce recall of your commercial. Very few creative people accept this. But we never heard of an agency using musical background under a new business presentation.

**19. Stand-ups.** The stand-up pitch can be effective, if it is delivered with straightforward honesty.

**20. Burr of singularity.** The average consumer now sees 20,000 commercials a year; poor dear.

Most of them slide off her memory like water off a duck's back.

Give your commercials a flourish of singularity, a burr that will stick in the consumer's mind. One such burr is the MNEMONIC DEVICE, or relevant symbol—like the crowns in our commercials for Imperial Margarine.

**21. Animation & cartoons.** Less than five percent of television commercials use cartoons or animation. They are less persuasive than live commercials.

The consumer cannot identify herself with the character in the cartoon. And cartoons do not invite belief.

*However, Carson/Roberts, our partners in Los Angeles, tell us that animation can be helpful when you are talking to children.*

*They should know—they have addressed more than six hundred commercials to children.*

**22. Salvage commercials.** Many commercials which test poorly can be salvaged.

The faults revealed by the test can be corrected. We have *doubled* the effectiveness of a commercial simply by re-editing it.

**23. Factual vs. emotional.** Factual commercials tend to be more effective than emotional commercials.

However, Ogilvy & Mather has made some emotional commercials which have been successful in the marketplace. Among these are our campaigns for Maxwell House Coffee and Hershey's Milk Chocolate.

**24. Grabbers.** We have found that commercials with an exciting opening hold their audience at a higher level than commercials which begin quietly.

### What works best in print

**25. Headlines.** On the average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy.

It follows that, if you don't sell the product in your headline, you have wasted 80 percent of your money. That is why most Ogilvy & Mather headlines include the brand name and the promise.

**26. Benefit in headlines.** Headlines that promise a benefit sell more than those that don't.

**27. News in headlines.** Time after time, we have found that it pays to inject genuine *news* into headlines.

The consumer is always on the lookout for new products, or new improvements in an old product, or new ways to use an old product.

Economists—even Russian economists—approve of this. They call it "informative" advertising. So do consumers.

**28. Simple headlines.** Your headline should *telegraph* what you want to say—in simple language. Readers do not stop to decipher the meaning of obscure headlines.

**29. How many words in a headline?** In headline tests conducted with the cooperation of a big department store, it was found that headlines of ten words or longer sold more goods than short headlines.

In terms of *recall,* headlines between eight and ten words are most effective.

In *mail-order* advertising, headlines between six and twelve words get the most coupon returns.

On the average, long headlines sell more merchandise than short ones—headlines like our "At 60 miles an hour, the loudest noise in this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock."

**30. Localize headlines.** In local advertising it pays to include the name of the city in your headline.

**31. Select your prospects.** When you advertise a product which is consumed only by a special group, it pays to "flag" that group in your headline —MOTHERS, BED-WETTERS, GOING TO EUROPE?

**32. Yes, people read long copy.** Readership falls off rapidly up to fifty words, but drops very little between fifty and five hundred words. (This page contains 1909 words, and you are reading it.)

Ogilvy & Mather has used long copy—with notable success—for Mercedes-Benz, Cessna Citation, Merrill Lynch and Shell gasoline.

"The more you tell, the more you sell."

**33. Story appeal in picture.** Ogilvy & Mather has gotten notable results with photographs which suggest a story. The reader glances at the photograph and asks himself, "What goes on here?" Then he reads the copy to find out.

Harold Rudolph called this magic element "story appeal." The more of it you inject into your photograph, the more people look at your advertisement.

It is easier said than done.

**34. Before & after.** Before and After advertisements are somewhat above average in attention value.

Any form of "visualized contrast" seems to work well.

**35. Photographs vs. artwork.** Ogilvy & Mather has found that photographs work better than drawings—almost invariably.

They attract more readers, generate more appetite appeal, are more believable, are better remembered, pull more coupons, and sell more merchandise.

**36. Use captions to sell.** On the average, twice as many people read the captions under photographs as read the body copy.

It follows that you should never use a photograph without putting a caption under it; and each caption should be a miniature advertisement for the product—complete with brand name and promise.

**37. Editorial layouts.** Ogilvy & Mather has had more success with editorial layouts than with "addy" layouts.

Editorial layouts get higher readership than conventional advertisements.

**38. Repeat your winners.** Scores of great advertisements have been discarded before they have begun to pay off.

Readership can actually *increase* with repetition—up to five repetitions.

### Is this all we know?

These findings apply to most categories of products. But not to all.

Ogilvy & Mather has developed a separate and specialized body of knowledge on what makes for success in advertising *food products, tourist destinations, proprietary medicines, children's products*—and other classifications.

But this special information is revealed only to the clients of Ogilvy & Mather.

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