



The Power Of Words

Leading Others To Teach Themselves Positive Truth

Dr. Frances Frei of Harvard Business School has revolutionized the training of employees in the service sector with this simple premise: To change the actions of individuals, you must first change their beliefs.

Beliefs cause behavior. Change one, and you change the other. This simple technique works on clients as well as salespeople.

Are your salespeople doing the wrong things? You must change their beliefs. Are your advertisers making bad decisions? Change their beliefs!

Interactive journaling is a tool for changing beliefs.

Radio has always been about the spoken word, but today I'm asking you to expand your confidence to include words heard silently in the minds of listeners as they read from a website or a printed page. I'm asking you to consider interactive journaling as a sales tool.

1. Interactive journaling is a series of written questions readers may answer however they choose — but these answers must be written down. This discipline of writing — as opposed to speaking — turns the mind of the reader inward to examine the outcomes of past choices and the potential outcomes of future choices.

In this private, inner world, there is no one with whom the reader can argue. There is no authority figure trying to impose his or her will. The only teacher in this inner world is the experience of the reader. The only voice heard is their own.

2. Interactive journaling uses carefully chosen questions to cause readers to relive the pain of past decisions and experience the pleasure of different choices. "Remember: In order for a perception to change, one must be frustrated in one's actions. Remember, too, that no one can force anyone else to change his perception" (Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, p. 136).

Harvard professor Steven Pinker, for 21 years the director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at MIT, teaches that humans are uniquely gifted to attach complex meanings to sounds. Pinker is referring, of course, to the sounds we call words. Words allow us to visualize possible alternate realities. "A yellow giraffe covered in pink polka dots rides a bicycle while balancing a beach ball on his nose." Reading the words, we see the giraffe.

Interactive journaling uses carefully worded questions to trigger memories of past pain and disappointment, then uses words — the reader's own words — to deliver pleasure when different choices are considered.

3. The printed word allows readers to "listen" at their own rate of comprehension. Unlike the spoken word, the printed word lets the reader "pause" the conversation,

allowing time to reflect and consider the future.

The most convincing of printed words are those written by the reader. Statements written by others may suffer a lack of credibility due to:

1. The reader's lack of relationship with the author. "Not my friend."
2. The reader's perception of the author's lack of experience. "Hasn't been through what I've been through."
3. The reader's suspicion of the author's hidden agenda. "Just trying to make me be like you."

Readers trust no opinion so much as they trust their own. Interactive journaling uses this implicit trust, carefully leading the reader to become his or her own teacher. This works as well with prospective advertisers as it does with current employees.

4. Humans take actions they have first imagined in their minds. The first step in behavior modification is to cause readers to imagine themselves making good decisions in circumstances where past choices have been counterproductive. Interactive journaling causes readers to imagine positive future actions.

5. The wording of the questions is critical. Control the question, and you control the mental image it conjures.

6. Summary: Interactive journaling

1. Takes the reader to his or her private, inner world.
2. Uses the reader's own words to trigger memories of past pain and disappointment.
3. Controls those memories through careful wording of the trigger questions.
4. Allows the reader to be his or her own teacher, capitalizing on the implicit trust of self.
5. Delivers pleasure when a positive future is chosen.

The easiest way to facilitate a change in beliefs is to lead people through a series of essay questions over a period of days, making sure the readers understand in advance they will NOT be asked to reveal their answers. The goal is for the readers to teach themselves.

Radio people are among the greatest speakers in the world. Interactive journaling requires only that they choose their words a little more carefully and then commit those words to paper.

Once your salespeople have done it and loved it, they'll want their clients to enjoy the same experience. Rudyard Kipling, author of *The Jungle Book*, said it best: "Words are the most powerful drug used by mankind."

Or do you disagree? **INK**

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How Clients Fail

Your client has a blind spot. Hidden within that blind spot is the client's limiting factor, the thing that's holding him back, suppressing his success. Do you want to be a successful advertising consultant?

Lesson One: Not every problem can be solved by advertising.

Lesson Two: Learn to see what your client doesn't see. Look for his blind spot.

Lesson Three: Don't set yourself up to take the blame for failures that stem from your client's blind spot.

Here are the most common limiting factors hidden within the blind spots of business owners:

Market Opportunity

A. Opportunity is staring your client in the face and he can't see it. **SOLUTION:** Point it out to him.

B. Your client has overestimated the potential of the trade area. Consequently, he's bumping his head on the low glass ceiling of a small population. **SOLUTION: 1.** Your client can expand his product offering or **2.** open in a second trade area.

If your client is frustrated because his never-ending

search for "his customer" hasn't been paying off with greater and greater success but instead seems to have flattened out, his limiting factor is almost certainly

1. Market opportunity or
2. Product appeal. Keep reading.

Product Appeal

A. Your client's product has a limited appeal or is flawed in a way that he can't see. **SOLUTION:** Find a way to open his eyes to the limiting factor.

B. Your client's product has a characteristic whose appeal he's underestimated. **SOLUTION:** Promote the newfound characteristic. You're going to create a success story with this client. Sell him, whatever it takes.

EXAMPLE: My partner, Peter Nevland, recently bumped into the owner of a bottled water service, who asked him for some free advice. Peter asked, "Why should the customer of another water service switch to yours?"

"We're locally owned." "Ten percent of our profits go to charity." Blah, blah, blah.

Peter was unimpressed and yawning. Finally, exasperated and grasping at straws, the man mentioned his water had



recently been voted "Best Tasting" by the readers of an obscure local business journal. Now you and I know a radio ad saying, "Voted Best Tasting by the readers of..." isn't going to cause many business owners to switch to this new company. Peter knew it, too, so he didn't make that suggestion. It would have been a radio ad doomed to failure.

"Why do you think you won?"

The man hung his head. "We cheat."

"How?" asked Peter.

"Our water is saturated with dissolved oxygen, twice the amount found in regular water."

"What does that do?"

"Dissolved oxygen is what makes water taste good. It's why cold water tastes better than warm water. Cold water contains more dissolved oxygen."

"You're saying your room-temperature water tastes like cold water?"

The man nodded his head.

"Do you always saturate your water with dissolved oxygen?"

"Yes, why do you ask?"

SAD ENDING: Peter was unable to convince the man to promote his better-tasting water "saturated with dissolved oxygen." I swear I'm not making this up. The man remained convinced his ads needed to say, "We're locally owned and give 10 percent of our profits to charity."

Staff Competence

A. Your client's frontline people see opportunities and solutions your client doesn't see. **SOLUTION:** Listen to these people and endorse their insights. Become their champion.

B. Your client's staff isn't nearly so smart as your client believes. They're consistently wrong, but dammit, they're so enthusiastic and they make sense and they're just so sincere! **SOLUTION:** Your client is going to have to tell his employees what he wants and how he wants it. If the employees can't get on board with it, he needs to toss them overboard and let them swim in the cold waters of unemployment. If that suggestion horrifies your client, then it's almost certainly his limiting factor.

Message Clarity

A. Your client understands the benefit of his product but has been unable to communicate it persuasively to the public.

SOLUTION: Craft the ad your client hasn't been able to craft. The secret to this is clarity, not creativity. Don't fall into the trap of cleverness. "The mystery of writing advertisements consists mainly in saying in a few plain words exactly what you desire to say, precisely as it would be written in a letter or told to an acquaintance." — George P. Rowell

B. Your client doesn't understand how the public views his product category. Consequently, his ads are irrelevant to them.

EXAMPLE: Your client has been saying, "We guarantee our work," when the customer's real anxiety is, "Will these people show up on time, or will I have to wait around all day?" **SOLUTION:** Speak to what the listener actually cares about. If you cave in to your client's insistence that his ads focus on "We guarantee our work," those ads will fail and your station will be blamed because "you don't have the right listeners."

You've got a choice to make: Fight with the client to give you a compelling message or apologize to the client when the ads don't work. Which do you choose?

Message Delivery

A. Your client has a song to sing but he hasn't been singing it. (In other words, he hasn't been advertising.) **SOLUTION:** Sing, little bird, sing! Find this bird. He's out there. But remember: You're not going to find this little bird by listening to other stations or reading the newspaper. Look at very small ads in the Yellow Pages.

B. Your client knows who would be interested in his product, but can't figure out how to reach them.

EXAMPLE: Your client sells engagement rings and wants to reach people who are about to get engaged, or he sells houses and wants to reach people who are about to start house shopping.

SOLUTION: 1. Your client can reach the online crowd with Google AdWords and/or use search engine optimization to lift his website to the first page of search engine results. This assumes, of course, that the majority of people about to look at diamonds or houses begin their search online. It also assumes your client is going to be able to gain and hold that first-page position. **2.** Use radio to reach the general population with a memorable message and then wait for the listener to need what you sell. Become the solution people think of immediately and feel the best about. Build your client's reputation with ads that have a high impact quotient. Quit trying to predict the moment of need.

Competitor Strength

A. Your client's category has a strong leader and it isn't your client. **SOLUTION:** Use the leader's reputation like a basketball backboard. Connect your client to the leader's reputation through indirect acknowledgment.

EXAMPLE: Avis came out of nowhere to become a major contender to Hertz with the claim, "We're number two. We try harder." Burger King separated itself from McDonald's with the statement, "Have it your way at Burger King." This statement would have made no sense if the public had not been acutely aware that McDonald's makes all its burgers the same. Likewise, the TV ads for Apple computers work marvelously because Mac openly acknowledges the existence of PC.

B. Your client's category has never had a leader because it's a category that makes people yawn. **SOLUTION:** Convince your client to say something memorable, do something ridiculous, push far enough beyond the norm to get roundly criticized. All publicity is good publicity as long as they spell your name right. Tell your client he needs to choose who to lose as a potential customer. You can't have insiders without having outsiders. It's not what you include, but what you exclude that defines you. Boring categories are boring because they try to include everyone.

Don't be boring. Choose who to lose. **INK**

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How I Win The Ad Wars (Frankly, I Cheat. You Can, Too.)

I became an advertising salesman so I could buy groceries. A college dropout with no financial safety net, I installed aluminum guttering on houses during the day and changed reel-to-reel tapes in an automated radio station at night. Our format was radio preachers who needed your money to pay for the airtime we sold them.

We were the number 23 station in a city of 23 stations. Our best ratings book showed us with a cumulative weekly audience of 18,000 people in a city of 1.3 million. We had between 400 and 800 people listening at any given moment. That sounded like a lot of people to me. One day I asked the manager why our station played no ads.

"You think you could sell some ads?" he asked.

I nodded like a bobblehead doll.

"Do it," he said as he walked away.

I asked the back of his head how much I should charge.

"Whatever you can get," he answered, without ever looking back.

When you sell ads on the tiniest station in town, you don't compete with the other stations. You sell only those businesses with too little money to afford anyone else. In fact, the money my clients gave me every month was usually all the cash they had. If my ads didn't work, I'd have groceries in my pantry, but my clients wouldn't. A man learns fast in that environment.

The first thing I learned is that people are bored by advertising for the same reason they're bored by anything else: lack of relevance.

When ads are relevant, customers respond.

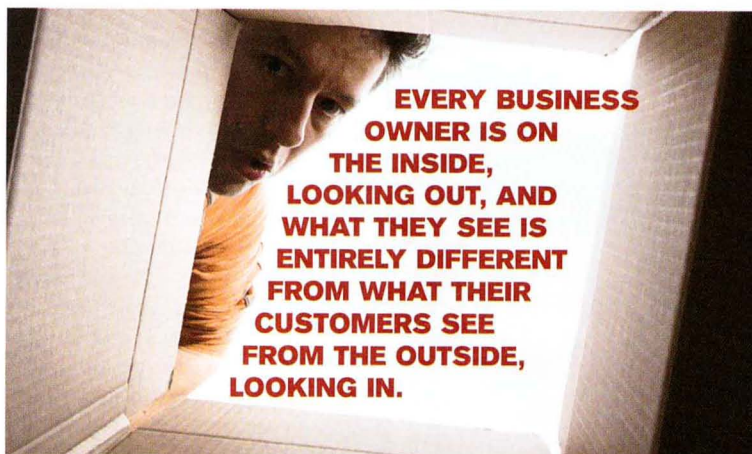
Are your ads relevant? Or are they answering questions no one is asking?

My job at the radio station paid \$3.50 an hour plus 15 percent commission. Within three years, I was making about \$6,000 a month. That was doctor-and-lawyer money 30 years ago.

Strangely, I never made that many sales calls. Most of my clients called the station to ask if they could buy ads from me. Usually, a friend had told them about the ads I was writing and how much money they were making as a result.

When the owners of my radio station sold it for 11 times what they had paid for it, I decided I'd rather become a self-employed ad consultant than move to Los Angeles and be a station manager for them.

The second thing I had learned, you see, is that good ads work no matter how they're delivered. I saw my ads work on virtually every radio and TV station in the city, and, with tiny variations, these same ads performed as direct mail letters and fax machine blasts.



The secret wasn't in reaching the right people. The secret was in crafting a message that would be relevant to the public.

My ads worked because I cheated: I insisted my clients let me deliver a message guaranteed to move the needle on the "Who cares?" meter.

Ads fail when no one cares. Most people horribly misjudge what the public actually cares about. It's a mistake to believe the price of the product is the most important part of an ad. A half-price turd is still a turd.

When a client belligerently demanded that I write some magic words to help him sell a load of crap that no one in their right mind would ever want to buy, I looked down at the ground, dropped a wad of spit on the toe of his shoe, then looked up into his face and said, "No."

Yes, it was a rude and vulgar thing to do, but I can assure you it shortened the argument. Word of my little stunt spread. Some saw it as the action of an egotistical lunatic. It's possible these people were right. But others saw it as the mark of a man who had the courage of his convictions. These people may have been right, too.

Every business owner is on the inside, looking out, and what they see is entirely different from what their customers see from the outside, looking in.

Great ad writers remain on the outside, looking in. This gives them their great advantage. A great writer is the advocate not of the business owner, but of the business owner's customer.

Do you have the courage to become the advocate of your client's customer? My best guess is that \$6,000 a month 30 years ago equates to about \$20,000 a month today. Could you get by on that? **INK**

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The Power Of Labels

Even When They're Wrong

Christian Jürgensen Thomsen was a young man interested in archaeology. So when the Danish government of 1816 needed someone to climb into the attic of Copenhagen's Trinitatis Church and sort through the rubble that had collected there, Thomsen was their man.

Upon entering the attic, Thomsen reported random items in "dust and disorganized disarray, hidden away in chests and baskets, among bits of material and paper. It was total chaos."

Sounds like my attic. Yours too, I'll bet.

The first thing young Christian Jürgensen Thomsen



did was organize the antiquities according to their material: stone in one pile, bronze in another, iron in a third. When the public was invited to an exhibition in that same church loft in 1819, it was the first time the division of the past into three "ages" was ever used.

"So familiar has Thomsen's tripartite division of the past into a Stone, a Bronze and an Iron age become, so complete the authority it has acquired, that we easily forget its comparatively recent vintage and attribute to it a degree of reality that it scarcely has a right to." — Historian Robert Ferguson

Ferguson says Stone Age, Bronze Age, and Iron Age are false labels adopted by people looking for categories where none exist. Likewise, I believe baby boomer, gen-Xer, and millennial to be false labels.

People are not imprinted at birth with a values system they carry throughout their lives.

Google the phrase "Attributes of baby boomers" and you'll read some truly idiotic assertions that have come to be widely believed, such as, "People born between 1946 and 1955 are experimental, value individualism,

and are free spirited. People born between 1956 and 1964 are less optimistic, distrust the government, and are generally cynical." — Wikipedia

Stone, bronze, and iron refer not to time periods, but to materials. Likewise, baby boomer, gen-X, and millennial refer not to people born during a certain window of years, but to values systems that were popular for a while in our society.

Advertising disasters occur when we assume a person's age bracket will be a reliable indicator of his or her system of values.

Yes, new systems of values are first adopted by the young. But later, when those values become mainstream and are embraced by the rest of society, they continue to be associated with the birth cohorts that first embraced them.

In truth, the pendulum of Western society swings in a very predictable 40-year arc and all of us are carried along with it. When our societal pendulum is moving toward individuality and self-expression, we live in a "Me generation." When we're swinging away from these virtues and begin working together for the common good, we live in a "We generation." The move from one extreme to the other takes 40 years.

We've recently seen our pendulum reach the bottom of its arc (2003) as we shifted from Me back to We. As a result, John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and *Die Hard* Bruce Willis are no longer in style. We laugh at the machismo of Steven Seagal.

You know these things already. So why aren't you letting these realizations affect your ad-writing, your jock patter, and your station promotions?

Listen to the radio (or worse, the teasers and intros for local television newscasts) and you'll hear a lot of deep-voiced, chest-thumping statements of dominance.

Radio isn't limited by its technology. We are limited, I fear, by our thinking. It isn't our towers and our transmitters that are no longer relevant. It is our style that has become obsolete.

Some of you have left the puffed-up attributes of the Me generation far behind and made the stylistic shift into the self-deprecating We generation. I applaud you.

Sadly, these stations are rare. Most radio stations continue to adopt a posture and style that smacks of the 1980s.

I don't say these things to hurt you.

It takes a real friend to tell you that you have spinach in your teeth. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

Failure At 33 1/3 RPM

I'm always stunned, slack-jawed, big-eyed, and stupid when a person chooses to do what obviously won't work. I stand there in a daze, awed by the fact that God can love such idiots as the human race. Maybe I overreact.

My first big-eyed moment happened when I was 21 years old. I was a sales rep in a radio station back before we learned to call ourselves account executives. Yes, I'm talking about the really old days. Cellphones didn't exist. If you needed to make a call, you dug in your pocket for a quarter and looked around for a phone booth. There were no such things as CD players or the Internet. The only way for the public to hear new music was on the radio.

Radio stations played black vinyl circles with grooves cut into them. A diamond needle on a mechanical arm would ride the groove and its vibrations are what created the music. You've probably seen this on *The Flintstones*.

My desk at the radio station faced a window that looked into the parking lot. About once a week I'd see a band show up in their finest show clothes and walk toward our door with hope shining from their faces like Christmas morning. The leader would carry the band's privately produced album like it was the Ark of the Covenant, a disc with the power to spin them into superstars at 33 1/3 revolutions per minute.

They imagined themselves greeted by a receptionist with a beaming smile. "My!" she would say, "You're obviously an important, up-and-coming band. I can tell by your impressive show clothes. Let me get the person in charge of the radio station so he can officially discover you."

Curious and hopeful, I would always walk down the hallway to see their pitch.

Our receptionist was as polished as a teller in a drive-through bank. You could almost see the bulletproof glass. "I'm sorry, but he can't see you right now.... No, you'll need to leave that with me. If he likes it, he'll give you a call.... Yes, I promise I'll give it to him personally."

And that would be the end of it.

Unless... I liked these people. In those rare cases, I would follow them into the parking lot and say, "Did you bring another one of those with you?"

I was instantly surrounded by wide eyes and white teeth. Christmas morning had returned, and I was Santa Claus. It was scary. "Do you work for Love 98 FM?" they'd ask.

"No, I work for their AM sister station."

An album would magically appear in my hands and a voice would say, "What's your format? We do all kinds of music. We've got slow songs, fast songs, rock songs, country songs, ballads, you name it. What kind of music do you play?"

"My station doesn't play music, but I can still help you."

Disappointed and suspicious, they would look at me as if Santa had said, "I didn't bring you any toys this year. I brought you something better." And then I would tell them how to get the attention of every radio station in America.

"The person who chooses the music is called the program director. And all along the baseboard of his office are stacked at least 2,000 unsolicited record albums he's going to evaluate as soon as he has time. Each album has 10 songs. Finding a hit in that pile of 2,000 albums will be like looking for a needle in a haystack. And to make matters worse, the covers of privately produced albums always look a little bit home-made. This creates an expectation of low-budget sound. And guess what? That's exactly what he hears when he drops the needle. Ten seconds into the first song, he lifts the needle and the party's over. The album goes back into the jacket, never to be seen again."

Now they're looking at Santa like he kicked their puppy.

I had been told I lacked people skills, but I plunged ahead: "Unsolicited albums are added to the stack along the baseboard, but 45 RPM singles get a needle dropped on them immediately, especially when they've got the same song on both sides. A 45 RPM single says to the program director, 'Somebody really believes in this song.' And singles are always packaged in plain paper sleeves, so there's no cover art to prejudice his opinion."

I'm having this conversation because I want to help these people, remember? So I'd always wrap up by saying, "Pick your best song, and pull out all the stops. Hire an arranger and a producer. Pay studio musicians to play those little accent parts that turn good songs into great ones. A high-budget single costs less to produce than a low-budget album."

We'd stand there in awkward silence until one of them broke the stillness. "You're an idiot," the voice would say, "With an album, we've got 10 chances to get airplay—but with a single we've only got one chance." And then they'd climb into the van and drive away while I stood there in the parking lot, dumbfounded.

Strangely, I never did quit advising people. In fact, I made a career of it.

But I learned something that saved everyone a lot of pain. A good friend told me, "Unsolicited advice is abuse." So I no longer offer unsolicited advice.

And just to play it safe, I no longer try to help musicians. **INK**

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Swim To Kansas

“Hello, ladies. Look at your man. Now back to me. Now back at your man. Now back to me. Sadly, he isn't me. But if he stopped using lady-scented body wash and switched to Old Spice, he could smell like he's me. Look down. Back up. Where are you? You're on a boat with the man your man could smell like. What's in your hand? Back at me. I have it. It's an oyster with two tickets to that thing you love. Look again. The tickets are now diamonds. Anything is possible when your man smells like Old Spice and not a lady. I'm on a horse.”

Much has been made of the new TV ad from Old Spice, “The Man Your Man Could Smell Like.” Yes, its seamless one-shot videography and old-school stage effects are

your man. Now back to me.” Swim to Kansas. Walk your dog. Kick a can. Lead the imagination. Don't be ignored. Write imperative voice.

Imperative:

1. Expressing a command or plea
2. Having the power or authority to command or control
3. Impossible to deter or evade; pressing

Do it. Open with a three-word sentence. Make the first word a verb. Prepare to be amazed. Imperative voice gets attention.

I shared all this with my partners during a two-day training session last month. Tim Miles, a brilliant ad writer with so many clients that he no longer accepts new ones — ka-ching — sent me the following e-mail a few days later:

Subject: Short Sentences Rock!

Dude,

That short, impactful sentence exercise we did last week? I used it to write lines for an ad that started Monday. We saw an immediate increase in the number of generated leads. Seriously — BANG like a gun.

Thanks for the technique.

Tim

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and left us this advice: “The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.”

Methinks Thomas knew a bit about writing.

Here's a 10-second example:

Swim to Kansas. Forget the water. The arms of the propeller on your Piper Meridian will move you quickly, safely, and in powerful style. Swim the grand ocean ... of the sky.

These are the keys:

1. **Short sentences.** Four words are okay. Three are better. Two rock.
2. **Open with verbs.** Walk. Sing. Wiggle. Kick. Dance. Jump. Swim. Lift.
3. **Imperative voice.** Tight. Taut. Command.

Today's column is short.

On purpose. **INK**

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THE MOST VALUABLE OF ALL TALENTS IS THAT OF NEVER USING TWO WORDS WHEN ONE WILL DO. — Thomas Jefferson



impressive and I'm certain the oyster in his hand is supposed to trigger unconscious sexual appetite, especially when its location is invaded by a massive Old Spice cylinder that rises slowly upward.

But these are not the things that captivate us. Impressive special effects and hidden sexual triggers are everywhere, no big deal.

That script, however, is a big deal. It's fabulous. (I'm going to quit typing for a moment so I can clap for the writer of that ad.)

OK, I'm back now. And yes, I really did stop and clap.

The magic of the Old Spice script is hidden in plain sight. Imperative voice is the sound of command: “Look at



Combine Two Ingredients For Explosive Ads

Relevance and credibility are the gunpowder and matches of advertising.

Relevance is a glowing promise that can ignite the flame of desire.

Credibility is quiet power: Details. Facts. Proof.

Without the gunpowder of credibility, the flame of relevance is empty, glittering hype; fluffy and without substance. We see a hollow promise, the brief light of a match in the darkness, and then the darkness returns.

Without a flame of relevance, the gunpowder of credibility is the answer to a question no one was asking. Credibility sans relevance is cold, heavy, and dry. We are bored by it.

But add the glowing flame of relevance to the dry gunpowder of credibility and

BOOM. You get everyone's attention.

BOOM. Folks come running from every direction.

BOOM. The world is on fire. Lights. Sirens. News cameras. Helicopters.

BOOM. Every banker wants to be your friend.

Want to hear something really strange? Writers who understand relevance are generally allergic to credibility. They speak ever to emotion, never willing to satisfy our hunger for details and proof. They say, "We have great prices!" and we say, "Name one." They say, "The lowest prices! Guaranteed!" and we say, "What are the terms of this guarantee, exactly? What happens if I find a lower price? Do I get the advertised item for free or do you make excuses, apologize, and expect me to walk away satisfied? Guarantee, my ass."

Writers who understand credibility seem allergic to emotional relevance. They hate hyperbole and never want to be accused of it. "We have been in business since 1953. We are part of the community. We believe in honesty and in making a fair profit. When other stores say 'half price,' you should always ask, 'half of what?' We don't play those mark-it-up to mark-it-down pricing games like the other stores. We are experts. You can trust us. Our staff has 170 years of combined experience. And yes, we're every bit as boring as we sound."

You realize I'm talking about more than just ad writing, don't you?

Relevance with credibility is also the perfect sales presentation:



RELEVANCE:

Begin by speaking to the advertiser's felt need. Don't assume that

you know what it is, and don't assume the advertiser will tell you the truth if you ask. You find an advertiser's felt need by watching and hearing what occupies his mind.

What does your advertiser talk about? What seems to be his current frustration, fixation, obsession? Which examples does he use when trying to make a point? Speak to those things. They are relevant.

CREDIBILITY: Always quote a disinterested, authoritative third party to prove your point. This can be a book, a magazine feature, a news story, a university study, or another client. But always remember, credibility means little until relevance has been established.

Step 1: Light the match of relevance.

Step 2: Touch it to credibility. And make sure it's a powder keg and not just a firecracker. The pop-pop-pop of firecracker credibility is like the yap-yap-yap of Grandma's annoying little Pekingese dog.

The person who combines relevance with credibility can change the world.

Relevance with credibility is the solution to public education. Our current educational system offers credible information that has little relevance to the lives of today's students.

Relevance with credibility is the answer for the church. Credibility is truth. Relevance is emotion. Truth without emotion is the ruling of a judge. No one is attracted to a courtroom. Emotion without truth is a cult.

Church attendance is dwindling in America because ministers, like ad writers, usually lean too far to one side and away from the other.

Without relevance and credibility, there can be no **BOOM.**

Salespeople, ad writers, teachers, trainers, and ministers, ask yourselves continually, "Does what I'm about to say have relevance? Will it speak to the hearts of my audience? Will they be moved?" And then ask, "Is my message credible? Are my promises supported by evidence without loopholes? Will the audience have confidence in what I'm saying?"

Relevance plus credibility:

BOOM. INK

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Change Their Minds? Not A Chance.

Making a sales presentation? Writing an ad? If you're going to be successful, the first thing you need to know is that people don't really change their minds, they simply make new decisions based on new information. In the absence of new information, there will be no new decision.

Give a person the same information you've given them in the past and they'll make the same decision they've made in the past. Want a new decision? Provide new information.

This new information can be facts and details, or it can be a new angle: "Today's expensive drugs pay for tomorrow's miracle cures."

That sentence doesn't give us new information. You and I already know:

1. Prescription drug prices are ridiculously high; and
2. Drug companies have to pay for their own research.

"Today's expensive drugs pay for tomorrow's miracle cures" merely gives us a new perspective by linking the first piece of information to the second.

People trust what they already know. Present your customer's own suspicions, beliefs, and prejudices as evidence, and they'll judge your assertions to be completely credible. Even when they're not.

That sounds a bit Machiavellian, doesn't it? Sorry about that, but I want you to have a clear understanding of the technique used by sinister leaders to gain control over large groups of people.

Racist presidential candidate George Wallace used this technique in 1968 when he told Americans to vote for him and "send a signal to Washington." His seemingly innocent statement was built upon two assumptions:

1. Something is wrong in Washington.
2. Wallace is against what's wrong and you should be, too.

That first assumption, "Something is wrong in Washington," is so easy to sell that the second assumption is swallowed without thinking.

Wallace used a communication trick I call "bouncing it off the invisible backboard."

1. When you say a thing clearly, it goes swish through the net like a basketball.
2. Bounce a new idea off an established idea and you're using the established idea as a backboard. We did this in the statement, "Today's expensive drugs pay for tomorrow's miracle cures." Drugs are expensive was the established idea to which we made specific reference. It served as a backboard.
3. But when you bounce your idea off another idea without making specific reference to the second

idea, I say you're bouncing it off the invisible backboard.

"White people are superior to black people" was the invisible, unspoken backboard off which Wallace bounced his statement, "Send a signal to Washington." He got 10 million votes from racists who agreed with his unholy premise. These people would never have spoken the words, "White people are superior to black people," but they were willing to cast their votes when all they had to do was agree with Wallace that "a signal needs to be sent."

I share this uncomfortable illustration only to show you that a person's true motives for saying yes are often too ugly, too awkward, to say aloud. In those cases, the pathway to yes will be found by delivering your message between the lines and bouncing it off the unspoken, invisible backboard.

You can say a lot in very few words when you bounce your message off an invisible backboard: "She's so fine there's no tellin' where the money went."

Pennie laughed the first time she heard that line in Robert Palmer's "Simply Irresistible." Let's look at all the assumptions cleverly hidden within that line:

1. There was money.
2. It's gone.
3. The man with the money was accompanied by an intoxicatingly beautiful woman.
4. He spent the money on the woman.
5. He has no memory of it. (Yes, she was that intoxicating.)

None of these things was said clearly. We intuit them, reading between the lines.

I'm convinced the invisible backboard is found in the right hemisphere of the brain. Unlike the left hemisphere, the right brain doesn't know fact from fiction or right from wrong. The right brain is all about pattern recognition — hunches, gut feelings, intuitions, and premonitions.

Don't speak directly, but indirectly, to your customer's hidden suspicions, beliefs, and prejudices.

If you suspect a client is feeling overwhelmed by a stronger competitor, don't say, "Because you're feeling overwhelmed, you should become the exclusive sponsor of this huge event. You should buy the biggest package." Just point your finger at the price and say, "Let's do this thing and show 'em who's boss."

Bounce your suggestion off the invisible backboard in the brain's right hemisphere and you'll find that people will agree with you without being able to explain why. **INK**



What Are You Measuring?

The best radio ads entertain the public and generate favorable comments."

That kind of thinking is why most radio ads don't work as well as they should.

I know it's counterintuitive and disconcerting, but the ads we hate often work better than the ads we love.

What are you trying to make happen with your ads? Have you been confusing compliments with results?

You're probably irritated by what I'm saying right now. Bear with me. I'm betting you'll find a nugget you can use.



Here are some outside-the-box concepts to ponder:

1. **Strange voices:** Voices that belong on the radio are easy to ignore. Voices that don't belong on the radio usually sell more product. Unpolished, amateur voices are hard to ignore. This is why they generate such hot complaints.
2. **Awkward language:** Smooth ads are built from worn-out phrases that are likewise easy to ignore. Effective ads often feature broken sentences. Half sentences. Nonsequiturs. This is how people speak, but it's rarely how we write. Our brains know how to assemble bits and pieces of verbalized thoughts so they make sense in our minds. Awkward wording and weird phrases capture attention. But we rarely use these when we write.
3. **No music:** Music beds sound good because they help blur the ads into the format. This makes the ads — you guessed it — easier to ignore.
4. **No humor:** Humor is like nitroglycerine. Handle it carefully, and you can move mountains with it. Handle it carelessly, and you'll blow your listener's attention completely away from your message; they'll remember your humor but not your adver-

tiser. Here's the rule: When the humor is directly linked to the product and its purpose, you're in the mountain-moving business. But when the humor is only tangentially connected to the product, resist the temptation to include it in the ad. Tangential humor will get you lots of compliments, but limited results.

Please understand, I'm NOT saying irritating ads always work. Sometimes an ad is irritating because it's badly written, poorly produced, and pointless. But these are rare. Far more common are ads that are badly written, extremely well produced, and pointless. But occasionally, you'll hear an ad that doesn't sound like an ad at all. The person on the radio sounds real, says real things, and is believable.

Jim Dunn's accent is difficult to penetrate because he spent his formative years in Boston. Remember Cliff Clavin on *Cheers*? Jim Dunn has a much thicker Boston accent than Cliffie, and Jim's store is in Florida. Earlier this year, Jim Dunn bought some radio time and simply told the truth.

JIM: What was I thinking? Opening a second location on Las Olas made sense at the time, I just can't remember why. Originally, I opened J.R. Dunn Jewelers in Lighthouse Point so that Ann Marie, Sean, and I could work together as a family. Opening that second location on Las Olas meant us working apart. The store was a success, but it was also a huge burden. There are things in life worth more than money. Togetherness is one of them. In late 2009, I asked Ann Marie what she wanted for Christmas. She said:

ANN MARIE: All I want is to spend more time with our family, and for you, me, and Sean to work together again. So if that means closing Las Olas, so be it.

JIM: When I asked Sean what he wanted, he gave me the same answer. Funny, it's what I wanted deep down inside, too. It's done.

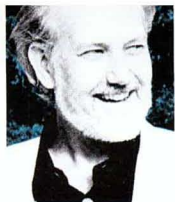
ANNOUNCER: Announcing the first, last, and only Happy Together Sale. The entire inventory of the Las Olas store has been moved to the original store location in Lighthouse Point. The Duns are back together again.

JIM: Join us in our family celebration. We've got fine jewelry hanging from the rafters. Two stores full of diamonds, watches, and jewelry jammed into one big happy location. Let us send some home with you.

Real people. Real voices. Real stories. Real results. Jim Dunn's event was a gigantic success.

Go figure. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

How Will Your Client Measure Success?

Different advertisers expect different things from their radio schedules. The key to success in radio is knowing how each client plans to measure the success of their schedule.

COST PER POINT. National advertisers measure access to target audience according to cost per gross rating point. These advertisers have no way of knowing whether your station is producing results or not, because your station is just one small part of a big, complex picture. Welcome to the world of media mix. In these instances, the buy is all about efficiency based on price. Whether or not the ads produce a result is not your responsibility. You're simply being paid for access to your audience.

My advice: Plant a word flag in the ad. Have your advertiser say something they're certain to be teased about. The first word flag I planted in an ad was 32 years ago. In that ad, I told the story about how "Little Freddie" had grown up working for his grandfather, the famous Mexican chef, Don Serapio Sanchez, and then one day Grandpa decided "it was time for Leetle Freddie to have hees oooown restaurant."

Many hundreds of people visited that restaurant, continually asking the owner, the waiters, and the cooks if they were "Leetle Freddie." The owner had never in his life been called Little Freddie, so every time someone said it, points went up on my scoreboard. Do you have the courage and wit to plant a word flag in your ads?

"IT'S THE WHOLE PACKAGE." Advertisers who refuse to name how they plan to measure success are the hardest to serve. My assumption is that most of them refuse to share how they measure results because they want to remain in control of negotiations. In these instances, the up-front emphasis is on the buy rather than the results. These people think of negotiation as a sport that has to have a winner and a loser. They refuse to name the rules because they want to be free to change the rules every time you make a presentation. Is this beginning to sound familiar?

My advice: Add a bunch of fluff to the package; broad rotators, overnights, mentions, website placement, etc. Let them feel they won. Think of these advertisers as direct descendants of that person 300 years ago who sold Manhattan Island for a box of shiny beads. Give these advertisers wampum.

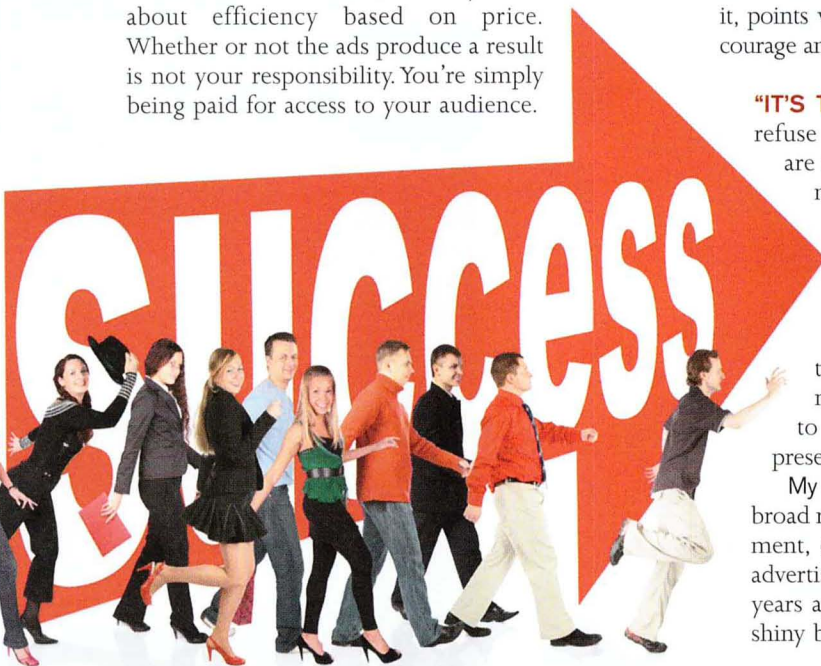
"THE STATION WATCHES OUT FOR ME. THEY DO EXTRA THINGS FOR ME." You've heard it. I've heard it. These advertisers are loyal to a particular station because they have a relationship with an account executive. I never did particularly well with these clients because, deep in my heart, I pitied them. Part of me was thinking, "If you need a friend, buy a dog. I'm here to talk about growing your business." So no, I was never a good professional visitor. But I did work with people who were good at it.

My advice: Take the client to lunch, take him golfing, ask about his family, hobbies, etc. Send him things you clipped out of the newspaper, to prove you think about him even when you're not together. It's for clients like these that radio stations have season tickets to important events. Make use of those tickets.

My advice: Take the money and run. Quit trying to make the buy about something other than price. It is what it is. Live with it.

Local direct advertisers, however, come in a wider variety of flavors. There are basically four ways that local direct advertisers measure success.

"I'LL JUST KNOW." Have you ever had an advertiser tell you they'll just know when their ads are working? They say, "I've been doing this a long time. I can always tell when the ads are working and when they're not." These advertisers may not know it, but they're measuring comments from their customers and friends. What's important is that you know it.



PLANT A WORD FLAG IN THE AD. HAVE YOUR ADVERTISER SAY SOMETHING THEY'RE CERTAIN TO BE TEASED ABOUT. THE FIRST WORD FLAG I PLANTED IN AN AD WAS 32 YEARS AGO. IN THAT AD, I TOLD THE STORY ABOUT HOW "LITTLE FREDDIE" HAD GROWN UP WORKING FOR HIS GRANDFATHER, THE FAMOUS MEXICAN CHEF, DON SERAPIO SANCHEZ, AND THEN ONE DAY GRANDPA DECIDED "IT WAS TIME FOR LEETLE FREDDIE TO HAVE HEES OOOOWN RESTAURANT."

"DOLLARS IN THE CASH REGISTER." Now that we know how results will be measured, we need to know when they'll be measured. If the measurement cycle is less than a year, you're dealing with a direct-response advertiser. Do you know how to write for direct response? The signature of successful direct-response ads is that they revolve around a specific, detailed offer followed by an extremely attractive price. This doesn't necessarily mean the advertiser must settle for a reduced profit on the advertised item. It only means that the price must seem low compared to what your listener assumed it would cost.

When the description of the item conjures a much higher price in your listener's imagination than the price you name in the ad, the item represents an extremely good value and will generate traffic and sales. If your advertiser is objective and unemotional, old-school loss leaders are a tried-and-true way of generating wondrous traffic. The term *loss leader* refers to a featured article of merchandise sold at a loss in order to draw customers. Let's assume the item is being sold for a dollar less than it costs the advertiser. "How many customers would you be willing to buy for a dollar apiece?"

This becomes a very interesting discussion when you're

meeting with an advertiser who knows how many different people purchased from them in the last 12 months. "This business exists for one reason," I say, "to bring customers through the door. Your rent is paid, your staff is paid, the utility bills are paid, and all your merchandise is purchased so that people will walk through that door and buy it."

I then ask the business owner to look in their books at the total cost of doing business for the past 12 months. "Now divide that number by the number of customers who purchased from you last year. That's how much you're currently spending on each person who walks through that door." The tiny loss on the loss leader instantly becomes immaterial.

Bottom line. Advertisers counting dollars in the cash register require that you know exactly how to make radio work.

My advice: Push for an offer that you're sure will generate meaningful traffic and sales. Don't settle for a half-baked offer. Make sure it's an eyebrow-raiser. Writing powerful ads is easy when you have something to say.

Have something to say. **INK**

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**"Congratulations
MIW's for mentoring
and inspiring us all!"**

—Kay Olin, President, Local Focus Radio/MIW

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

Client Need A New Perspective?

Frank Kern is senior vice president of IBM Global Business Services. On May 19, 2010, he released a survey of 1,500 chief executives conducted by IBM's Institute for Business Value. Are you ready for this? According to that survey, today's CEOs identify "creativity" as the most important leadership competency for the successful enterprise of the future.

"That's creativity — not operational effectiveness, influence, or even dedication," Kern says. "Coming out of the worst economic downturn in their professional lifetimes, when managerial discipline and rigor ruled the day, this indicates a remarkable shift in attitude."

YOUR CLIENTS ARE STRUGGLING BECAUSE ADVERTISERS TEND TO PLAY IT SAFE WHEN THE ECONOMY IS SLOW. BUT WHEN IT COMES TO ADVERTISING AND MARKETING, PLAYING IT SAFE IS THE LEAST SAFE THING THEY CAN DO.

Your clients — just like those 1,500 CEOs surveyed by IBM — are feeling a little bit discouraged and confused. The reliable old truisms of business aren't as reliable as they used to be. They need some creative thinking.

My suggestion? Share the results of this IBM study with your clients. Engage them in a conversation about the future of — not their business — but their business category. A discussion about the category will feel less invasive, less personal, less confessional to your client. Ask about the pressures and changes that are affecting the entire category, and you'll learn a lot more than if you focus the inquiry directly on your client.

At some point in the conversation, introduce this idea: "As you know, I'm fairly ignorant about the inner workings of your business, but ignorant people like me aren't stupid, we're merely uninformed — a marvelous advantage when you need a perspective from outside the box. Truly naive individuals are so thoroughly outside, they're not even sure what you mean by 'the box.'" You'll probably get a laugh here. Maybe not.

"When you consult specialists within your industry, you're talking to the builders of the box, the guardians of the box, the faithful defenders of the box. So when specialists fail to provide the innovative thinking you need, it's sometimes a good idea to ask the opinions of intelligent people who have no experience in your industry. The naive suggestion won't be workable. What you make from it will be. This has proven to be the second quickest shortcut to successful innovation."

Pause until they ask — wait for it, wait for it — BAM! "What's the quickest shortcut?" This is where you fascinate

them with an interesting answer and give them a gift. This is where you move from greedy salesperson to valuable consultant.

You say, "Back during the years of the Cold War, a Soviet scientist named Genrich Altshuller studied thousands of patents until he realized that every revolutionary idea is simply a manifestation of one or more of 40 basic answers."

Your client will be intrigued. Now that you have his attention, continue with the story: "If you look at your limiting factors — the things that are holding you back — through the lenses of these 40 answers, you can systematically consider your problem from every possible perspective in a relatively short period of time."

This is where you hand them a copy of what you downloaded online for free. "This is a fascinating book written by Mark Fox, the youngest chief engineer in the history of the Space Shuttle project. It's called *DaVinci and the 40 Answers*, and it explains how to use the principles of TRIZ — that's what the Soviet scientist called it — to discover workable solutions in a very short period of time. TRIZ is what all the leading engineers and scientists are studying right now. It's really cool stuff."

You can buy Mark Fox's *DaVinci and the 40 Answers* on Amazon.com or download a PDF copy for free at www.slyasafox.com/register.html.

You're welcome.

I'm betting you'll have no problem getting a follow-up appointment.

Your clients are struggling because advertisers tend to play it safe when the economy is slow. But when it comes to advertising and marketing, playing it safe is the least safe thing they can do.

A report just released from MIT reveals a surprising connection between progress and playing it safe.

When bonuses were given for increased performance when only mechanical skills were required, the bigger the bonus, the better the performance. No surprise, right? But when bonuses were offered for cognitive skills, even rudimentary ones, higher incentives led to poorer performance. I swear I'm not making this up.

"These findings have been replicated over and over and over again by psychologists, by sociologists, and by economists," says professor and author Daniel Pink.

It seems that the higher the reward, the greater our tendency to second-guess our highest and best creative impulses.

Fear is a terrible master. It is by attempting the ridiculous that we accomplish the miraculous.

Go. Accomplish the miraculous. **INK**

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Escape Your Comfort Zone

I recently spent 30 long hours preparing nine ad-writing apprentices for what lay ahead of them in the coming weeks. Strangely, none of my apprentices was new to marketing. Each of them signed up for this excruciating seven-week adventure to escape the handcuffs of specialization.

The first four were full-time advertising professionals with deep experience in:

1. Financial services
 2. Clothing
 3. Garden centers
 4. Cameras and video equipment
- The others were:
5. The owner of a newspaper

6. The chief marketing officer of a technology firm that created several of the wonders at Walt Disney World

7. A seasoned, high-profile marketing guru who took an obscure regional retailer (Fred Meyer) to \$7 billion a year

And then we added an extra seat for:

8. The head of a major department at the Mayo Clinic, a lifelong turnaround specialist who takes medical practices from loss to profit

And:

9. A new employee I recently hired from a field of 214 applicants

These apprentices were not assigned clients in their categories of specialization. The goal was for (1.) the apprentices and (2.) 63 business owners to break out of their comfort zones.

I told my nine specialists: You will feel trapped in a tiny room whose walls are closing in on you. The first wall will be the delusion of the client regarding what really matters to the customer. They'll want you to say all the things they've been saying that haven't been working. *They're hoping you can say them differently and get a different result.* Writing great ads is easy when the message is relevant, credible, new, surprising, and different. Extracting a message from your client that will be new and surprising to the customer and genuinely different from the claims of the competitor is the hardest thing you will ever do.

The second wall will be made of brick: your client's financial or managerial inability to implement the plan in which you have the deepest confidence. Most of the time you'll have to settle for Plan B, C, or D.

The third wall will be the product purchase cycle: How often is the customer in the market for this product or service? Food is easy to sell. Entertainment is easy to sell. We crave these things every day, so they have a very short product purchase cycle and ads for these categories

pay off very quickly. But what about life insurance, tires, refrigerators, and chandeliers? How often do we buy these things? Product purchase cycles are carved in stone. No amount of wishing or hoping or cajoling or debate will put customers in the market to buy your client's product before they're ready to buy it.

The fourth wall will be your own prejudice. You will be strongly tempted to evaluate product offerings based on whether or not they would appeal to you personally. You cannot allow yourself to judge subjectively. They key isn't whether or not you and all your friends would be attracted to the offer. The key is to find similar offers that have worked well in the recent past.

But if you use an idea that is already common within your client's industry, it won't be new, surprising, or different to the customer. You must use business problem topology to find a tested, reliable innovation that has been developed and refined in an unrelated business category. The old, reliable concept in one category may be new, surprising, and different in your client's category. Find a BPT solution for your client and the resulting ad will be powerful, effective, and easy to write.

The ceiling of this tiny room in which you are trapped will be the limitations of the marketplace. You'll have to calculate the market potential: How much does the public currently spend in your client's category? The monster king of a category usually controls between 25 and 33 percent of that potential. It's almost impossible to grow beyond that number. How close is your client to those numbers already? Next you'll have to evaluate your client's competitive environment: When customers don't buy from your client, where do they buy? Why do they buy there? The marketplace is what it is. You cannot materially change it. You must learn to be prepared for what is.

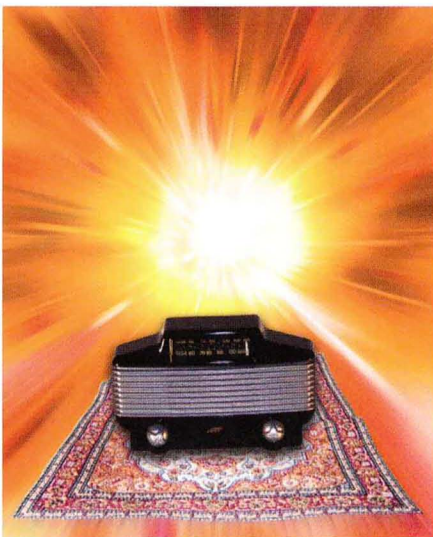
Yes, advertisers have blind spots, but so do you.

You're a radio professional. You live in a world of cost per point, time spent listening, AQH shares, spot rates, ad budgets, target audiences, and flight schedules. Your job forces you to talk about these things constantly. That's why it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking these things matter far more than they do. In truth, how well an ad works on your station is determined primarily by what the ad says. The successful ad will have relevance and credibility in the mind of the listener. And if the information isn't new, surprising, and different, the ad will likely deliver limited results.

And that, I think, is what lies in the blind spot of radio. In the end, it's always about the listener and the ad. Radio is merely the vehicle of message delivery.

But oh, what a wonderful vehicle! Radio is a magical, musical flying carpet that can take you to hidden places in a listener's mind. Never, ever forget that. **INK**

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The Winner Is Determined When....

Sean Taylor recently attended a high-class function to receive a Melvin Jones Award on my behalf. Melvin Jones founded the Lions Clubs International, and his award is the highest honor the club can bestow. You can't win the MJ Award unless you're a Lion — which I'm not — so the board of directors voted to make a special exception for me.

Yes, yes, it sounds like I'm boasting, but I promise I'm not. I'm making a full confession.

The wiener dog races we sponsor each year in Buda, TX (population: 2,404), made \$120,000 for the Buda Lions Club this year. More than 600 wiener dogs arrived from all over America to compete for our six-foot-tall first-place trophy. Each race has been bigger than the last for 12 consecutive years.

My company, Wizard of Ads Inc., comes up with a theme, designs the posters and T-shirts, writes and records a silly radio ad, and pays for the oversized trophies.

The Lions International website says, "Lions meet the needs of local communities and the world. Our more than 1.35 million members in 206 countries and geographic areas are different in many ways, but we share a core belief — community is what we make it."

Sounds good to me, but I fear there's been a horrible misunderstanding: You see, I cheated.

Have you ever seen kids playing football, baseball, or soccer on a playground? The winner is determined when the captains choose sides. Pick the right players, and you win. Pick wrong, and you lose.

I won 12 years ago when I refused to sponsor anything but the wiener dog races.

"But Truck City is sponsoring the wiener dogs."

"Sorry, it's the wiener dogs or nothing."

"Won't you reconsider?"

"No."

"You'll be helping a really good cause...."

"Get Truck City to sponsor the precision lawn chair drill teams or the riding lawnmower races."

"Trust me, Mr. Williams, you want the riding lawnmower races. Do you remember the episode of *Home Improvement* when Tim 'The Toolman' Taylor was going to race riding lawnmowers with Bob Vila and Tim put a jet engine from a Chinook helicopter on his lawnmower?"

"Sure."

"We're going to have that lawnmower — the actual one from the TV show — in this year's race. And it's got a real jet engine."

"Sorry, but it's the wiener dogs or nothing. Convince Truck City to sponsor the lawnmowers."

Truck City was magnanimous and changed its sponsorship to the riding lawnmowers. I wasn't willing



to risk my reputation as an ad consultant on anything but a sure bet.

The lawnmower races and the lawn chair drill teams were abandoned when the wiener dog races started to gain serious national momentum.

The source of the misunderstanding — and the root of my confession — is that everyone assumes we could just as easily have aimed our mighty firepower at the lawnmowers or the lawn chairs and made them successful, too. But I know it isn't true.

We won the game when we picked the wiener dogs.

This is the dirty little secret of advertising: You determine the success of the campaign when you pick what you're going to promote.

Have you been settling for precision lawn chairs and lawnmowers? Repent of your sin. Demand that your clients give you the wiener dogs.

You'll be amazed how much better your ads work. **INK**

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WEIRD COINCIDENCE: Pennie and I were unable to pick up the Melvin Jones Award in person because we were traveling to an auction to buy an ancient, 500-pound marble lion from India. The next time you're on the Wizard Academy campus, look for Melvin chillaxin' in the shade in front of my office. Melvin is one *mellow* lion.



How To Spot A Wiener Dog

I concluded my last column by saying, "We won the game when we picked the wiener dogs. This is the dirty little secret of advertising: You determine the success of the campaign when you pick what you're going to promote. Have you been settling for precision lawn chairs and lawnmowers? Repent of your sin. Demand that your clients give you the wiener dogs. You'll be amazed how much better your ads work."

An old friend e-mailed me to say, "Please forgive me for being grumpy ... but you gave no explanation in your *Radio Ink* column on how to distinguish between wiener dogs and lawnmowers."

My friend makes a good point. Not every idea is a wiener dog. Sometimes it's just a dog.

Each of us has two kinds of blind spots. The first is a negative trait of which you are unaware. Everyone around you sees it, but you can't. The second is a talent or gift you assume to be common to everyone, but it isn't. It's your gift.

I've always been able to spot a wiener dog. My ability to pick the winning idea from a shuffled deck of mediocre ideas is so completely intuitive and effortless that it annoys me when other people can't do it. Even more annoying is when they ask me to explain how I do it. "It's a wiener dog! Can't you see it? Open your eyes! It's a freakin' wiener dog!"

The day after I received that e-mail from my friend, I met Ray Bard, my publisher, for lunch. Ray immediately bopped me with the same question. "Roy, I couldn't help but notice that you never told us how to spot the wiener dog. Why did you leave that part out?" Part of me stood up, clenched my fists, and screamed in frustration. But that part of me is invisible.

The visible part of me said, "Ray, you gave me the formula for spotting wiener dogs 10 years ago. Don't you remember?" Ray looked at me quizzically, so I continued. "Puddles, bayous, wells, and oceans.... Question 1: How widespread is the interest? Question 2: How deep is the interest?"

Ray got it, but I was on a roll, so I said, "Spotting a winning idea is all about identifying

1. defining characteristics and
2. limiting factors."

The defining characteristics of the precision lawn chair drill team idea were irrelevant because the limiting factor was that each team would need a talented choreographer and members who were willing to practice relentlessly. And we know that's not gonna happen. The precision lawn chair idea was a puddle. It could never trigger more than narrow, shallow interest.

The defining characteristics of the riding lawnmower races were:

1. gasoline and
2. testosterone, so basically, it's a poor man's NASCAR.

Consequently, it would trigger deep interest, but only to a narrow section of the population. Riding lawnmower races were a well.

The defining characteristics of the wiener dog races were:

1. Dogs. Everyone loves dogs. Kids love dogs. Families have dogs. Dogs have personalities. They're cute. People love to show off their dogs and don't hesitate to spend money on them.

1a. The dog is usually considered a member of the family.

1b. Dogs don't have to rehearse to be dogs.

1c. Wiener dogs are funny-looking and have a funny name. A bunch of wiener dogs is like a barrel of monkeys — instant, guaranteed fun.

The limiting factor of a wiener dog race would be: How many people own wiener dogs?

Answer: Lots. More than enough. It's a very popular breed.

Result: Widespread interest that will be deep enough to cause large numbers of people to actually show up for the event. The wiener dog idea is an ocean idea.

Question 1: How widespread is the interest?

Question 2: How deep is the interest?

Narrow, shallow interest is a puddle. No one is fooled by puddles.

Narrow, deep interest is a well. You can make money with a well idea because its customers will be highly motivated and easily targeted. Cult brands are built on wells.

Widespread, shallow interest is a bayou. Advertisers see a bayou and think it's an ocean because they really want it to be an ocean. They lie to themselves about the depth of the public's interest. Echo the advertiser's delusion back to them and you'll make the sale but lose the customer. The best AEs recognize a bayou when they see one and warn the client at the top of their lungs.

Widespread, deep interest is an ocean. That's why each year's wiener dog races in my little town of 2,404 people has been bigger than the year before. This year we raced more than 600 wiener dogs and raised \$120,000 for the Buda Lions Club. Next year's profits will likely be \$150,000.

Want to make a lot of money? Learn how to spot a wiener dog.

And don't be fooled by bayous. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

Left Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook

I'm going to explain a very sophisticated ad-writing technique to you, but I believe you'll understand it perfectly well.

Learn to incorporate it into your writing and your ads will produce better results, generate more comments, and make people smile.

Tight-asses will criticize you, of course, but hey, they're tight-asses.

This is a very simple, straightforward ad I put together recently for a fish market:

Take home a fresh fish dinner for four, just \$39.99 — gourmet side dishes and salads included. Tasty, healthy, and fresh. Low calorie! More relaxing, more affordable, and better for you than eating out. The freshest fish you've ever tasted. The *New York Times* said, "If it were any fresher, you'd have to catch it yourself." Your choice of side dishes made from scratch by our award-winning chef, Andre Franchione, and choice of two salads — each one enough to serve four people — made by our rising-star salad chef, Silvia Simpkins. And fresh-baked homemade bread. Be sure you're sitting down when you take your first bite. This bread is so amazing that people have been known to pass out from the sheer wonderfulness of it. Call right now and have fresh fish tonight. Your meal will be ready to serve just 20 minutes after you get home. You got questions? We got answers, and much better fish than you'll find at the grocery store. No pesticides, no growth hormones, no color added. Fish so healthy you'll live forever. Call Deepwater Seafood right now at 555-3812.

The left hemisphere of the brain wants facts, details, descriptions, and benefits. Lefty is all about sequential logic and deductive reasoning. Lefty looks for loopholes and anomalies and is full of doubt. But the right hemisphere cares for none of that. The right half of the brain is where fantasy lives. And Righty doesn't know fact from fiction.

If you merely exaggerate, your customer's left brain will shoot your claims full of holes. But if you go beyond mere exaggeration — so far beyond it that the left brain knows you're just clowning — the right brain will happily embrace your glowing fantasy in all its positive glory.

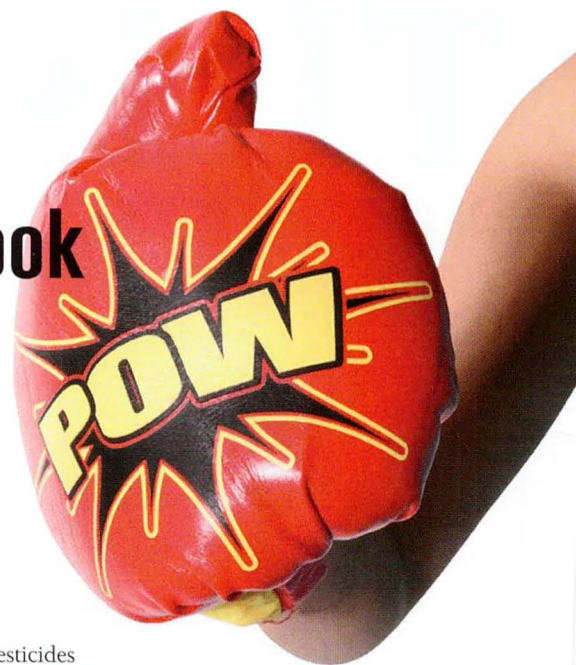
This is the technique:

Open with two or three quick jabs of fact:

1. "fresh-baked"
2. "homemade bread"

Then hit the right brain with everything you've got: "Be sure you're sitting down when you take your first bite. This bread is so amazing that people have been known to pass out from the sheer wonderfulness of it."

Again, two or three quick jabs of fact:



1. No pesticides
2. No growth hormones
3. No color added

Then electrify Righty with an impossible dream: "Fish so healthy you'll live forever."

Yes, we're speaking to the unconscious. We don't need the customer to believe our silly, over-the-top promise. The customer doesn't even have to think it's cute.

All they have to do is hear it. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is deep branding.

Another benefit of this left jab, jab, jab, right hook technique is that right hooks always become word flags certain to be repeated by customers with a smile. When they place the order, they're likely to say, "Make sure you give me some of that bread that makes you pass out!" And as they lift their bag of fish off the counter and turn to leave the store, the customer is likely to smile again and say, "Fish so healthy you'll live forever," and then walk away.

You gotta love it when listeners quote memorable lines from your ads to your clients.

Anyone who has sold radio for longer than 10 minutes knows that saying, "Mention you heard this radio ad and receive 10 percent off," doesn't work. My theories are: 1. It makes people feel like Oliver Twist asking for another bowl of porridge, and 2. listeners worry that they're going to say, "I heard your radio ad," and some mouth-breathing employee is going to say, "What ad?" Then your listener's got a real problem: If they say, "The one that says I get 10 percent off," they risk Mouth Breather saying with a snort and a sneer, "Nice try." Or worse, M-B throws his head back and shouts across the store, "Ralphy! Do you know anything about a radio ad that says this guy gets 10 percent off?"

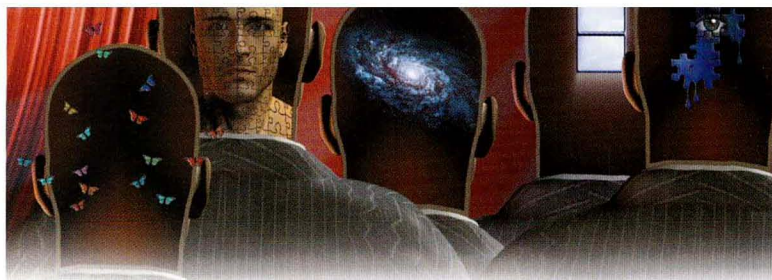
Play it safe. Plant a word flag with a right hook. Listeners always mention word flags because they think it's fun; a moment of friendly connection with a merchant that's guaranteed to make three people smile: 1. The witty listener who repeats the line, 2. the happy advertiser who hears it, and 3. the rich radio rep who sold the campaign.

Be that rep. **INK**

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Radio 101



FEMALE: "Thank you for a magical Christmas. I didn't know it could still be like this."

MALE: You'll hear those words again and again from your family and friends. And as you smile and say, "Thank you for coming," you'll remember with fondness the magical elves of Knupper's. Our elves come every year on the first of November, bringing extraordinary pre-lit trees, hard-to-find greenery, stems of spectacular plants, and authentic, Old World Christmas decorations you won't see anywhere else in Chicagoland. This year, the Knoppers' elves are bringing noble fir wreaths and trees all the way from the Pacific Northwest. None of your guests will ever have seen a tree like these. The glorious smell, the rich color, the natural balance and grace of these trees is beyond compare. You'll know instantly why they're called noble. And the elves bring them only to Knupper's. Plan on making at least two trips to Knupper's this year. Our elves tell us you're going to be so dazzled by your first trip, you'll have to come back just to be sure you really saw what you saw. Elves, magic, and holiday happiness. It's all real at Knupper's.

"Radio is theater of the mind, a motion picture that shines on the movie screen of the listener's imagination. And you, my little ad writer, will be the maker of those movies." The speaker was Bob Lepine. The year was 1980. I was the newbie and he was the old pro. I'll bet the brightest and best still use that theater-of-the-mind metaphor today. Some things never change.

I didn't write that Knupper's ad in 1980. I wrote it just a week ago for Christmas 2010. It's a simple ad. Nothing special, just a simple stacking of shapes, colors, and names of things familiar. The only thing that makes it a "good" ad is the balance between information and benefit. To the left of the equals sign — on the information side of the equation — we read: pre-lit trees, hard-to-find greenery, Old World Christmas decorations, noble fir wreaths and trees.

On the right side of the equals sign — the benefit side of the equation — we read, "Thank you for a magical Christmas. I didn't know it could still be like this," glorious smell, rich color, natural balance, elves, magic, and holiday happiness. Then we tie it all together, "It's all real at Knupper's."

The "It's all real" line is important because it links elves and magic and holiday happiness to the sensual elements of natural smell and color that emanate from noble fir, old-world wreaths, and trees. "It's all real." But the subconscious mind of the listener will hear a deeper message in "It's all real" because words have multiple meanings, "Not plastic, not phony, not hollow and stressful and empty like last year's Christmas."

Your listener's secret dream of a Norman Rockwell Christmas is made attainable by the lines describing the glorious smell, the rich color, the natural balance and grace of noble fir. "It's all real."

Here's a fruitier, but equally effective ad. Notice the plain statement of benefits:

(FOOT 1 has a deeper voice than FOOT 2.)

ANNOUNCER: When your feet are tired, your whole body is tired.

FOOT 1: What a day!

FOOT 2: You got that right.

ANNOUNCER: Shoe Fly helps you feel better, walk better, look better, live better.

FOOT 1: Sounds good to me.

FOOT 2: Uh-huh.

ANNOUNCER: We've got good-lookin' shoes in your size, no matter how wide or narrow your feet.

FOOT 2: Who you callin' wide?

ANNOUNCER: We're Shoe Fly Shoes, a shoe store for people who want to feel better, have more energy, and wear good-lookin' shoes.

FOOT 2: I said, "Who you callin' wide?"

FOOT 1: He said we were good-lookin'.

FOOT 2: OK, then.

ANNOUNCER: Our digital foot analysis uses 3,744 sensors to display your foot size, arch type, and pressure points.

FOOT 2: That's right, I am a technological marvel.

ANNOUNCER: Digital foot analysis is fun and it's free.

FOOT 1: Say on, brother. Free is a good word.

FOOT 2: Say it again. Say "free."

ANNOUNCER: Free.

FOOT 2: Right on.

ANNOUNCER: Don't punish your feet with department store shoes.

FOOT 1/FOOT 2 in UNISON: Please, not those!

ANNOUNCER: When your feet feel better, your legs and your back feel better, too. Shoe Fly Shoes. In Harrisburg on Route 22 and Colonial, or on Jonestown Road.

FOOT 2: Come on. I'll take you there right now.

Radio is like every other sport: Master the basics, and you can play in the big leagues with the big boys and bring home the big money. Keep your eye on the ball, swing level, follow through = shapes, colors, names of familiar things.

Now go help your clients sell some stuff. You personally have more power to stimulate the economy than the combined efforts of a thousand "average" people.

What makes them average? They don't take seriously the power of words or have access to a radio station. But you do. **INK**

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Copy, Frequency, And PPM

Buying local radio on more than 500 stations in 38 states requires my firm to analyze radio schedules on more than 2,000 stations each year. Many of these stations are in PPM-rated markets. Consequently, we've learned a few things.

If the data from the Portable People Meter is correct — and I believe it is — frequency is much tougher to attain than we previously believed. Generally speaking, PPM tells us that listeners tune in to twice as many stations as they report in their diaries, so each station's TSL is lower than we thought. The stations with the strongest identities, the catchiest slogans, and the most mnemonic call letters are rewarded with diary numbers that indicate huge audiences those stations never really had. Meanwhile, the less-remembered stations are forced to give away airtime at rates far below what they actually deserve.

If you were a buyer, which station would you buy? (A.) The heritage station whose call letters are on everyone's lips according to the diary method, or (B.) a station with identical AQH persons according to PPM, but their rates are half those of the "dominant" station because people listening to station B according to PPM often report in their diaries that they're listening to station A.

We see this every day. For the record, we buy station B. This makes the staff and management of station A hate us, but hey, if we needed a friend we'd buy a dog.

Now that we've isolated the best values in the marketplace, we still need a schedule that will give us frequency. We need the identical listener to hear the identical ad at least three times within seven night's sleep. PPM data has opened our eyes to the difficulty of achieving this three frequency.

Horizontal scheduling is the answer. We're buying very narrow windows of time at very unusual times of day and slotting our ads in those windows day after day after day. If we don't do this, the schedule reaches too many people with too little repetition. The timing of these very narrow windows changes from station to station. There are no golden times of day that cross all formats, as previously believed.

Traditional dayparts are a selling tool for radio stations. They have no basis in reality according to PPM. If you're still marketing drive times, middays, and evenings, you're thinking of radio like it was in the '70s and '80s.

Gosh, I'm glad I have a dog.

After 30 years as a professional writer, I recently



learned something about radio copy that shocked me to my core. Ten weeks ago I accepted nine apprentices who paid Wizard Academy a few thousand dollars each for me to mentor them as ad writers. One hundred businesses across America then paid Wizard Academy \$500 each to be interviewed by a randomly selected apprentice who would talk to them and craft ad copy for their business, which I would then edit into something worth airing. Several pages of detailed notes accompanied each ad I received from my apprentices, who dug and pushed and probed in these interviews in the hope of emerging with something worth saying. It's an old adage, but true: Writing great ads is easy when you have something to say.

There were no surprises during the first couple of rounds, but I began to notice something in week three that struck me as odd: The same few apprentices always seemed to get the smarter, better clients, while the rest of the apprentices were assigned businesses managed by idiots. But this was impossible.

By week six, the obvious conclusion was inescapable: The quality of the ad created by the apprentice was entirely dependent on the quality of the interview conducted. It didn't seem to matter much whether the writer was a "good" writer or whether they were particularly "creative." This conclusion was confirmed by the results reported by the advertisers. The ads that worked best were the ads created by those apprentices with superior interview skills. The format of the station on which the ads aired, the schedule, the reach, the frequency didn't much seem to matter.

Wow. We're back where we started. PPM, TSL, AQH, reach, frequency, and "loyal audiences" don't mean much when we fail to extract a meaningful message from the advertiser.

Note to Jeff Haley, whom I much admire: Jeff, how about RAB creating a training program to teach AEs how to extract **a message that matters** from their local-direct advertisers? My recent experience tells me this interview training would make a bigger difference than anything else we could offer.

But maybe I'm wrong. **INK**

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Yes, Numbers Do Lie

Numbers don't lie is what people say when they defend their faulty logic. Their math is always flawless. The problem is that they gathered the wrong numbers.

But the wrong numbers always look so right.

The key to success is to gather different information and use it to make different decisions than your competitors.

Here's an example: Half the people in town live north of the river and half live south. People rarely drive across the river to go to a restaurant. Everyone stays on their own side.

The people north of the river are better educated and own homes of higher value. In fact, 64 percent of all discretionary income resides in the pockets of people north of the river. Only 36 percent of discretionary income is to be found down south.

You're planning to open a cloth-napkin restaurant. Where will you put it?

If you said, "North of the river," you instinctively used traditional logic to come to the same conclusion as the previous 99 people who opened a new restaurant in this city. As a result, you're 1 of 100 restaurant owners fighting over 64 percent of the cloth-napkin dinner dollars.

If you get your fair share of the market potential, you'll be forced to subsist on 0.64 percent of the cloth-napkin dinner dollars.

Meanwhile, the nine upscale restaurants south of the river are making huge profits. You could have been number 10, but you were seduced by the wrong information. So now you're living on 0.64 percent of the dinner dollars in this city when you could have had a waddling 3.6 percent if you had only opened your restaurant down south. (A waddling profit is so fat it walks like a duck.)

You assumed higher-income people buy cloth-napkin dinners more often. But you were wrong. Those people live in more expensive houses, drive more expensive cars, shop in more expensive furniture stores, and pay higher taxes — but they don't buy cloth-napkin dinners any more often than the "poor" people down south.

You focused on an illusory target customer when you should have been gathering data on the actual competitive environment. Instead of asking, "Where do the people with money live?" you should have asked, "Where in this city are restaurants like mine doing far more business than they should?" The answer would have rung like a bell: "Down south. Down south. Down south. Down south."

That example wasn't imaginary, by the way. The city is Austin, TX.

The myth of the target customer was created by media sales reps as a way of differentiating their ad packages from those of their competitors. I'm not saying the concept of a target customer is completely meaningless. I'm simply saying the **competitive environment** is, without exaggeration, at least 20 times more important when it comes to your client's success.

$$2 + 2 = 5$$

Competitive environment is an amalgam of location, visibility, convenience, and reputation. These are reinforced or contradicted by word-of-mouth and personal experience. Your client will forever be compared to his competitors. To pretend that the competition doesn't matter is completely idiotic.

Bottom lines:

1. Advertising cannot create success; it can only accelerate it.
2. A loser in one town might be the king in a town with weaker competitors. Likewise, the king of his category could be torn limb-from-limb in a community with tougher competition.
3. Your client's customer is influenced by a number of factors beyond your control.
4. Sell a schedule to a loser and you'll have a hard time collecting your money because, "The advertising didn't work."
5. Sell a schedule to the category king and you won't get credit for the difference you made because the king always believes, "It was going to happen anyway."
6. Do your best to partner with a category challenger who is making a move.
7. If the only changes they're making are limited to their advertising, their grand plan is probably not going to work.
8. If the new advertising is just one small part of a much bigger plan, the chances for success are much improved.
9. People never change their minds. Give them the same information you gave them in the past, and they'll make the same decision they made in the past.
10. A person who appears to have changed his mind has merely made a new decision based on new information.

You've now received new information. Will you use it to make a new decision about whom to prospect and what to promise them? Or will you go back to asking, "Who is your target customer?" and then reply, "Wow! That's exactly who we reach! Your business and our station: It's like a hand and glove, a marriage made in heaven!"

Seriously, I'm not trying to make you angry. I'm merely suggesting that there are a great many more variables to success than are part of the current conversation between media reps and business owners.

Change the conversation and you change the outcome. Change the conversation and you change your client's perception of you.

Ah. There it is. Waddle-waddle-waddle. **INK**

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Brilliant Programming 101

"Find out what people want, and give it to them." This seems like a simple recipe for success, right? Buy the research, do some focus groups, talk to your listeners, always be testing.

If only it were that easy.

Successful radio programmers know that today's "known and familiar" music has deep appeal. It's like comfort food. But a steady diet of comfort food gets monotonous pretty quickly. And wasn't today's "known and familiar" music once "new and different"?

If you ask people what they want, their answers will necessarily be limited to those things to they've been exposed to. If a programmer in the 1960s had asked the radio audience what they wanted that they weren't already getting, do you suppose any of them would have said, "I want half the song to come from one speaker and the other half to come from a second speaker"? Yet when audiences were exposed to this new thing called stereophonic sound in the early 1970s, they couldn't live without it.

Revolutions happen and fortunes are made when you boldly answer a question that no one asked. If it works out, you had confidence. If it doesn't, it was hubris. Better luck next time. Oh, wait. There won't be a next time. You got fired because you didn't play it safe.

There are times, however, when playing it safe is the least safe thing you can do. I believe 2011 will be one of those times.

I'm old enough to remember when the only way to receive FM radio in your car was to buy a little blue device that hung under the dash and plugged into the back of your radio. A little thumbwheel allowed you to tune across a bandwidth you couldn't see, but sure enough, there were a couple of stations on this new thing called FM — "but there's no way it's ever going to become big. It doesn't show up in any of our research."

In those days, FM licenses were free for the asking from the FCC. No one wanted them. "Top 40 on AM is king. It will always be king. People only want to hear the hits. That's why they call them hits, stupid."

Forty years ago, programmers who hungered for safety stayed with the AM giants, the heritage stations, the blue-chip winners. Meanwhile, the tinkerers, dreamers, weirdos, and renegades clustered in dusty back rooms where they muttered, "Wouldn't it be cool if..." and "Why don't we try..." and "Whoa! That was great!" No one in management paid much attention because the weirdos were mostly low-paid weasels whose primary job was to keep the insignificant FM "sister station" on the air. Beyond this, the only possibility was that the weirdos might build a little cult audience for some specialty format. So management ignored them, which is exactly what they needed.

Within four or five years, the blue-chip AM stations were on their knees and those FM licenses were selling for

RECIPE FOR TURNING DEADWOOD INTO GOLD

1. Take one property for which you have no real expectations.
2. Add one colorful troublemaker whom people seem to follow.
3. Blend in two evil geniuses always laughing at inside jokes that no one else seems to understand.
4. Toss in a webmaster who admires the colorful troublemaker and gets a kick out of the evil geniuses.
5. Give them a tiny, tiny budget.
6. Give them the freedom to trade airtime — but only on their own station — for what they need.
7. If the team bitches about not having any money, you picked the wrong guys. Fire them and start over.
8. Give the colorful troublemaker, the two evil geniuses, and the webmaster unconditional freedom.
9. That's right. Don't ask them to clear things with you. You need to protect your deniability.
10. Don't apologize for them, and never insist that they do it, either.



millions. No one saw it coming. Not even the tinkerers, dreamers, weirdos, and renegades. Those guys weren't visionaries. They were just playing and having fun.

Having fun. That's where it always begins. Fun is popular. Fun is addictive. Fun is contagious. Fun is freedom. Harriet Ruben said it best: "Freedom is actually a bigger game than power. Power is about what you can control. Freedom is about what you can unleash."

But then the money shows up and the fun gets sanitized and systematized so that it happens at exactly 14:00 and 37:00 on the program clock.

Radical new ideas don't drip from the funnel of the logical, linear, sequential, deductive-reasoning left brain. They spring, laughing with a full set of teeth, from the doesn't-know-right-from-wrong right brain, that shadowland whose logic is known as intuition, and whose only business plan is: Trust me, it'll be cool.

Want to know where the next big thing in radio will emerge? My money is on the throwaway frequencies owned by some of the larger groups in the top 50 markets; those fourth or fifth stations in the cluster that no one can quite figure out what to do with.

Sooner or later, a cluster manager is going to follow steps 1 through 10 above, and history will be made. Maybe someone, somewhere has already started. If so, I want to buy stock. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

Three Ads: One Bad, Two Good

Ads are (1.) category-focused, (2.) product-focused, or (3.) client-focused.

The good thing about category-focused ads is that they're portable; anyone in the category can use them. The bad thing about category-focused ads is that they don't distinguish you from your competitors, because anyone in the category can use them. I've been told there are some good category-focused ads out there, but I've never encountered one personally.

Here's an example of a category-focused script for TV or radio. Prepare to be underwhelmed. It's really a very bad ad:

MALE ONE: I used to hate going to the dentist, but then a friend told me about Dr. _____, *the gentle dentist with the healing touch.*

FEMALE ONE: I love Dr. _____. I wouldn't go anywhere else.

FEMALE TWO: So you recommend Dr. _____?

MALE: No question about it.

FEMALE ONE: Absolutely! He's *the gentle dentist with the healing touch.*

FEMALE TWO: I've had some bad experiences at the dentist's office. Dentists scare me.

FEMALE ONE: Not Dr. _____.! He (she) is truly concerned about his (her) patients. He (she) *really cares.* And his (her) friendly staff will even fill out your insurance papers for you.

FEMALE TWO: Does he (she) charge extra for that?

MALE: No! It's a free service that Dr. _____ extends to all his (her) patients.

FEMALE ONE: I'd be willing to pay *twice as much* to go to Dr. _____ because he (she) has *the healing touch*, but he (she) doesn't charge a penny more than those other dentists!

FEMALE TWO: I'm convinced! Do you have Dr. _____'s number handy?

MALE: I have an appointment card here in my wallet. [short pause] Dr. _____'s number is XXX-XXXX.

FEMALE TWO: Was that XXX-XXXX?

MALE: Yes, XXX-XXXX.

ANNOUNCER: Dr. _____. *The gentle dentist with the healing touch.* Call today for your appointment. XXX-XXXX

FEMALE ONE: XXX-XXXX. *The gentle dentist...*

MALE: ...*with the healing touch.*

I'll bet you're glad that's over, right?

Like category-focused ads, product-focused ads are portable. Anyone who sells the product can use the ad. But unlike category-focused ads, product-focused ads can be hugely effective.

Are your flower beds lifeless? Fruits and vegetables suffering? This summer has been hell on Idaho gardens. But I'm going to help you resurrect it as the **Garden of Eden**. This is John Crook of Town and Country Gardens and I've found a miracle I want to share. It's called **Save-A-Tree**, but don't let that name fool you — **Save-A-Tree** was invented by a **gardening genius** who knows all about plants, but next to nothing about marketing. Flowers **spring** back to life and look beautiful again, fruits grow **sweet** and **ripe** and

luscious, and vegetables get bigger and tastier than you've ever had before. And it's all natural, so it's almost impossible to burn your plants with it. Our customers are **raving** about **Save-A-Tree** because it **works**. Don't give up on those plants! Give 'em the gift of new life. **Save-A-Tree** is available *exclusively* at Town and Country Gardens. It's truly a miracle in a bottle.

(jingle: "Town and Country Gardens / Bringing beautiful things — to LIFE")

Across from the Budweiser plant south of Idaho Falls, and at the corner of Oak and Hyde in Pocatello.

My newest employee, Jacob Harrison, wrote that ad for John Crook when John donated \$500 to help finish the tower at Wizard Academy. John just e-mailed to let us know what happened: He invested exactly \$750 running Jacob's **Save-A-Tree** ad on the radio in August. Gross profit dollars from **Save-A-Tree** sales in August 2009: **\$933**. Gross profit dollars from **Save-A-Tree** sales in August 2010: **\$3,099**.

BOTTOM LINE: John paid for the product, paid for the advertising, and put \$1,416 dollars in his pocket. Product-focused ads can be wonderful, but you have to have an exceptional product. **Save-A-Tree** is an exceptional product.

Client-specific ads are powerful, but they're never portable. They're also the hardest ads to write:

When I was 7 years old, I held my father's head in my hands as he took his last breath and died. A thing like that stays with you. It helps you understand that relationships — *people* — are what life's all about. **You gotta tell 'em you lov e'em.** This is J.R. Dunn. So now you know why I became a jeweler. Fine jewelry is one of the ways we tell people we love 'em. When I got older and fell head over heels for Ann Marie, the love of my life, I didn't have enough money to buy her an engagement ring. She married me anyway. Go figure. But I can promise you *this*: If you're thinking of getting engaged to the love of your life, come to J.R. Dunn Jewelers in Lighthouse Point. No one in Florida, no one in *America*, is going to give you a better engagement ring for your money than me. One of the great joys of my life is to make it possible for guys to give the woman they love the diamond she deserves. There was nobody there for me when I needed an engagement ring. But I **promise** I'll be there for *you*.

END OF AD — no location tag. We don't want to "commercialize" the message.

Every word of that ad is true. You've never met Jim Dunn, but you feel like you know him a little, right? And you know he wants to help you. And you know why.

Client-specific ads are difficult to write, because it takes a long time to dig out what you need from the client.

Writing great ads is easy when you have something to say. What does your client have to say? Can you, will you, dig it out of them? **INK**

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What To Say

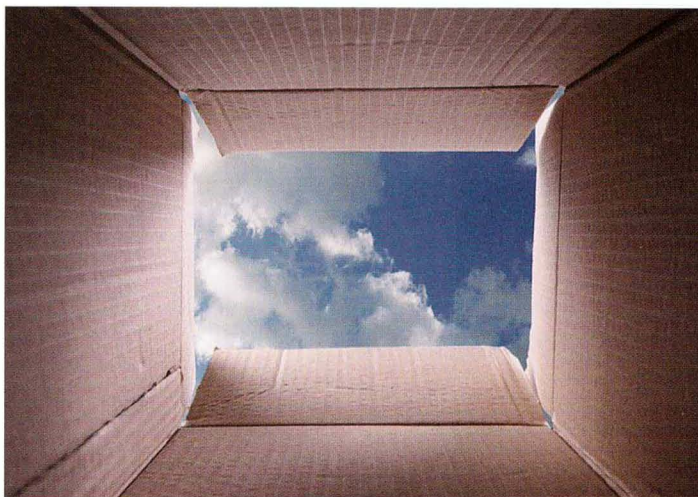
Old ideas are carried by old words.
New ideas are carried by new words.
Old words keep you inside the box.
New words help you escape it.

If you want to remain inside the box and fall behind the pack, just keep talking about target customers, demographics, gross impressions, and unique selling propositions.

Do you want to keep up with the times, get ahead of the curve? Grasp the new ideas. Learn the new words. Use them when you talk to your clients and prospects.

These are the new ideas. These are the new words.

- **Felt need:** A desire in the heart of the customer. To speak to an unfelt need is to answer a question that no one was asking.
- **Relevance:** A message has relevance to the degree it speaks to a felt need.
- **Credibility:** A message has credibility to the degree it is believed.
- **Impact quotient:** Relevance + credibility.
- **Competitive environment:** An objective assessment of (A) your client's market category, and (B) your client's place in it. Strengths and weaknesses compared to the strengths and weaknesses of competitors. The competitive environment includes location, reputation, selection, product lines, unaided recall (brand awareness), etc.
- **Limiting factor:** Anything that's holding your client back.
- **Unleveraged asset:** An ace your client forgot he had up his sleeve.
- **Uncovery:** An interview-driven search — conducted by you — for the unleveraged asset.
- **Curse of knowledge:** The blinders that come with expertise. When a person knows something, it's hard for them to imagine not knowing it. As a result, they can't see outside the box. Tell your clients about the curse of knowledge. Ask them to let you help them speak to the felt needs of their customers. As experts, they suffer from the curse of knowledge and risk speaking to an unfelt need. This causes their message to have no relevance; hence, no impact quotient.
- **Core competence:** What the client is really all about.
- **Market potential:** The total dollars available in a client's business category in your marketplace. Easily measured if you know their NAICS code. Google it.
- **Share of voice:** An advertiser's percentage of all the advertising done in their category. Location visibility, signage, word-of-mouth, etc., are included in this metric.
- **Share of mind:** The mental real estate an advertiser



owns in the mind of the public. Share of voice x impact quotient = share of mind.

- **Share of market:** An advertiser's percentage of the total business volume done in their category.
- **Authenticity:** Being what you say you are.
- **Transparency:** Showing your dirty laundry; admitting a downside rather than ignoring it. Transparency increases credibility.
- **Personal experience factor:** Buzz is triggered by personal experience. If the experience of your customer — the word on the street — does not line up with your message, your message has no credibility. Unscripted, unedited, unpolished testimonials have credibility because they carry the credentials of personal experience and the markings of authenticity.
- **Ad-speak:** Cliches, empty phrases, unsubstantiated claims, and hyperbole — the language of yesterday's advertising. Words without weight, having neither relevance nor credibility.
- **Brandable chunks:** Vivid, recurring phrases used by an advertiser to help position and define the brand. Slogans and taglines are out. Brandable chunks are in.
- **Black words:** Empty words that fail to contribute to a colorful mental image. The objective of every good writer is to remove the black words so that the others shine more brightly.

Were you waiting for me to discuss metrics, unique visitors, pageviews, and the other jargon of digital media? No need. Those things are already being discussed as much as they need to be.

Do you see how these new words and phrases help to reposition the discussion of advertising and help you write more effective ad copy? Now look through the list of concepts again and see how many of them can be aimed back at you to help you create and deliver better sales presentations.

The four keys to a rainbow future are:

1. **Relevance**
2. **Credibility**
3. **Speak to a felt need**
4. **Be what you say**

That's it, really. The rest is just bookkeeping. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

What Keeps Change From Happening?

**Thoughts are the threads that bind us to deeds.
Deeds are the ropes that bind us to habits.
Habits are the chains that bind us to destiny.**

— Inscription carved on the West Wall
at the Palace in Maygassa

My friend Don Kuhl says, "All change is self-change," and the first things we must change are our thoughts.

Harvard's beloved Frances Frei echoes Kuhl, "To change a person's behavior (deeds), you must first change their beliefs."

Do radio people need to change their core beliefs? I'm not saying I know the answer, but I do believe it's a legitimate question.

Frei's friend and Harvard colleague, Youngme Moon, takes this discussion of habits even further in her new book, *Different*. If you believe in making things different,

truly different, I strongly suggest you get a copy.

The wonderfully insightful and irreverent Moon also gives us this marvelous Anti-Creativity Checklist, "for people who want nothing to do with pie-in-the-sky innovation, crazy flights of imagination, or any of that wacky, out-of-the-box thinking."

1. Play it safe.

Listen to that inner voice. "Why should I stick my neck out?" "I'm not going to go out on a limb." "Safer to let someone else champion that."

2. Know your limitations: Don't be afraid to pigeonhole yourself.

"I'm not an artist." "I'm not creative." "I'm not an innovator."

3. Remind yourself: It's just a job.

"I don't get paid to come up with ideas." "I'm keeping my mouth shut." "There's nothing in it for me." "When's lunch?"

4. Show you're the smartest guy in the room: Make skepticism your middle name.

"Here's why that idea won't work." "You won't be able to execute on that." "Our organization's not set up for that."

5. Be the tough guy: Demand to see the data.

"What does the market research say?" "There's no evidence it's going to work." "That didn't come out of the focus group." "Show me the spreadsheet."

6. Respect history: Always give the past the benefit of the doubt.

"We've always done it this way." "If it's such a good idea, why hasn't anyone thought of it yet?" "That wasn't part of the original plan."

7. Stop the madness before it can get started: Crush early-stage ideas with your business savvy.

"You haven't made the business case." "I don't buy your assumptions." "There's no immediate ROI."

8. Been there, done that: Use experience as a weapon.

"We tried that a few years ago and it didn't work." "You haven't been around long enough to know how things work." "Let's not reinvent the wheel, guys."

9. Keep your eyes closed. Your mind, too.

"The world isn't changing. The media just wants us to think it is." "I refuse to get caught up in all these technology fads." "Don't tell me how to run my business."

10. Assume there is no problem.

"It was a tough year, but we can blame the economy." "We think next quarter we'll see a rebound." "We're doing OK."

11. Underestimate your customers.

"Our customers aren't going anywhere." "They're not ready for that." "That's not what they're asking for."

12. Be a mentor: Give sound advice to the people who work for you.

"Just keep your head down and do your job." "I got where I am by not rocking the boat." "Choose your battles, kid. This isn't one of them."

13. Be suspicious of the "creatives" in your organization: the liberal arts majors, the poets, the anthropologists, and other wackos.

"Those guys don't understand business." "I can't believe we're keeping them on the payroll." "Who invited them to this meeting?"

14. When all else fails, act like a grown-up.

"I really don't have time for this." "Do you have an appointment?" "Back to work, everyone."

My face stings a little every time I read that list, sort of like I've been slapped, but my heart responds like the guy in that old TV ad for Mennen Skin Bracer: "Thanks. I needed that."

Here's a wacky suggestion: The next time radio gets together for a big convention, why not ask Youngme Moon to come and speak to us? If anyone can find a reason why we shouldn't do it, I'll wager they borrowed it from that list of 14 above.

You up for it? I am. **INK**

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