

MERCHANDISING



I'm NECESSARY,
but not EVIL !!



Only two kinds of people should never advertise

A cynical Josh Billings who lived from 1818 to 1885 once said, "As scarce as the truth is, the supply has always been in excess of demand."

But the fact is truth and sincerity are at the very heart of successful advertising. And buyers punish the deceptive or downright dishonest. David Ogilvy, who was one of the most successful and influential people on Madison Avenue in the 1950s and 1960s, advised all advertisers to "...give up flatulent puffery" and, instead, produce factual and informative advertising. Advertisers who follow this advice, he said, "...would not only increase their sales, but they would also place themselves on the side of the angels. The more informative your advertising, the more persuasive it will be," stated Ogilvy.

Some people think that buyers are dumb and that advertising can sell anything regardless of the utility or quality of the product. Advertising critics further contend advertising influences people to buy products they don't need, can't afford, or that are of questionable value.

P.T. Barnum, the great promoter and showman, didn't buy this idea. "You can advertise a spurious article

and induce many people to buy it once, but they will gradually denounce you as an impostor," Barnum said.

"The quickest way to kill a brand that is off in quality is to promote it aggressively," said Howard Morgens. "People find out about its poor quality just that more quickly."

Fred Francis of Wilmington, IL, one of my favorite country philosophers, puts it another way: "If you sell your reputation, get a high price for it," he recommends, "because you will only get one opportunity."

A lot of cattle people still don't have a high opinion of advertising though. Many look upon it at best as a necessary evil. That's an old attitude. A noted Angus leader from the first part of this century exhorted: "Let us be an industry of noble cattle breeders and husbandmen, and there will be no need to become advertisers."


The man was a bit of a contradiction, though, because he had one of the best known herds in the country at the time he said it. He was a leader in the Angus business, served as Association president, showed winning breeding cattle and steers, and regularly topped the Chicago market with his home-raised steers. He did a lot of advertising even if he never bought space in a magazine. But competition today is so tough that a successful breeder needs to take advantage of every opportunity to pro-

mote his breeding program. Even selling cheap won't work.

Kent Mitchel, a successful national advertiser and marketer in another industry, says: "There's always someone out there with a lower price. You've got to build your (business) with tools like advertising and product differentiation."

But you get the point. Just two more quotes to end a dissertation which, obviously, is borrowed almost entirely from other people.

Archbishop Leighton is said to have prayed: "Deliver me, Oh Lord, from the errors of wise men, yea, and of good men."

And then there is Evans, neither wise nor particularly good, who assures you: "The only business people who shouldn't advertise are the dishonest and those who sell a product that can't deliver the benefits promised by the advertising." 

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and Public Relations