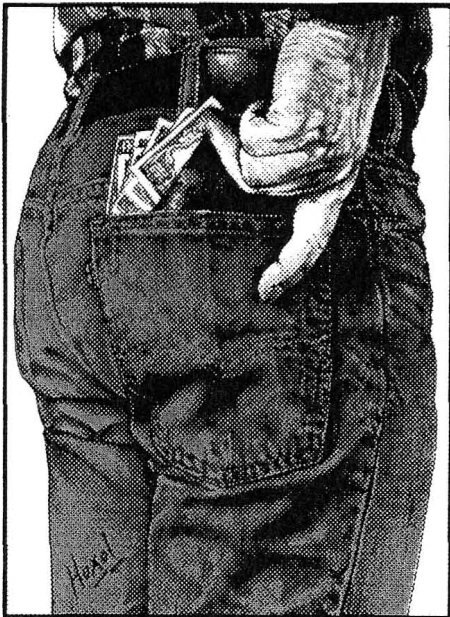


MARKET COMMUNICATIONS

ADVERTISING (PART I)—
TELLING YOUR STORY THE WAY YOU WANT IT TOLD
Second of a 6-part series on promoting and marketing purebred cattle.

by B. E. Fichte



Drawing by Huxol

Cattlemen waste a lot of money in advertising.

That's unfortunate, because good advertising can be one of the best money-making tools available to the purebred beef producer.

We're victimized by the "too much" syndrome—"too much" advertising based on last-minute panicky decisions; "too much" poorly planned advertising (if, indeed, planned at all); "too much" searching for a 1-shot panacea; "too much" based on poor graphics, sorry pictures and weak copy. And "too much" scattered shotgun without definite purpose or audience.

Some of this is understandable because there is a lot of blue sky in beef cattle advertising. It's often difficult to measure precise results, much less make accurate predictions of its value. *But we do know that good advertising works!*

Backbone of Program

Advertising is the best way to tell *your* story to *your buyers*. It is the backbone of your external marketing communications program, the *one element* you should consider *first* when developing your overall program. It's *your* story, *you* control it, and *you* must do it.

You can't expect someone else to do it for you. While your national or affiliate breed association may be doing an excellent job in selling the overall image and advantages of your breed, it can't specifically sell *your* cattle. That requires your own unique style, your own individual advantages or "reasons to buy."

Your advertising should reflect your objectives, your image, your market position, your audience and the specific idea or message you wish to get across. It should be consistent in theme and in appearance (visual identity). *It should be distinctively, uniquely, yours.*

Pre-determined Criteria

Just recently I listened to a speech by a marketing executive of a major brewery. In discussing advertising strategy, he said, "Good advertising must be based on a pre-determined image, market position, audience, distinct visual appearance and quality of presentation." *The same things we discussed in our first article in this series.*

To steal further from his remarks, he said, "After we were satisfied with the development of the product, we had to give it a new *image*. It had to be packaged to reflect a *quality* product; it had to have a *look* of masculinity, for most beer drinkers are men; it needed instant eye-catching *visual impact* at the point of sale; and it had to have a robust beer *image*."

Identification

"We decided to appeal to ordinary people as our *audience* and use ordinary people to carry that message—people

that our prospective buyers could identify with. Once we had established our *marketing position* (in this case, as the leading lite beer for ordinary people), we could tell the facts, be believable, be different and relate to the heavy beer drinkers in our advertising all at the same time."

Now this is no beer commercial. But the principles of good beef cattle advertising are no different. Read over the key words: *Quality, image, visual identity or impact, audience, and marketing position*. The exact same things that must be reflected in your advertising!

Before you develop and publish any advertisement, make sure it is believable (creditable) and reflects those key words.

Types of Advertising

You should consider two types of advertising. *Institutional* and *direct sell*. At least that's what we call them.

Institutional advertising is used to develop and present an overall theme or message, to create or enhance an image such as quality, leadership, knowledge, prestige—broad general advantages or features of your ranch and cattle. Most breed association advertising is institutional.

Direct sell advertising deals with a specific product or service and is usually direct to a specific point in time—a production or consignment sale, specific listing of cattle for sale *now*, for example.

Most breeders need both types in their program.

Cumulative Value

Institutional advertising, properly presented, can be extremely effective in helping form concrete images in the minds of your prospective buyers. With continuous use, it becomes permanent and cumulative and provides the foundation for both short- and long-term marketing programs. Once you have established the desired rapport with your

prospects, you can use that "pipeline" to carry all subsequent messages to them.

While developing the image, prestige, advantages or name of your breed within the industry is one of the functions of your breed association, you must also assume some of the responsibility. That is, while your primary objective is to market *your cattle*, you may need to subtly (or not too subtly) stress the overall advantages of your breed, depending on the prevailing attitudes and knowledge of cattlemen in your area.

This is bound to stir up some folks, but here goes anyway!

Cooperative Advertising

Generally, we do not recommend that our clients participate in cooperative breeder advertising. It offers no individuality (except when you get your one "turn" at featured exposure), it has no continuity of message or purpose, no coordination and, generally, very little quality. Unless there is a strong central theme and close coordination of message and quality, I think it is a waste of money. Just another way to sell advertising space in a magazine.

An exception to this might be in cooperative advertising by breeders in a

fairly close geographic area or by affiliates of a national association. However, if it is to be successful, it must meet some of the same criteria we have previously discussed. It must be goal-oriented, it must have a purpose and it must reflect quality. And, most of all, it must have *centralized coordination* to see that all the criteria are met.

Affiliate Co-op Ads

There also is some interest and activity by a few breed associations in cooperative advertising between the national association and its affiliate organizations. Again, the same principles apply, with extra emphasis on coordination. In such cases, the affiliates must have access to material being used by the national association and advance notice of the national's advertising campaign. Then, with proper coordination, affiliates may be able to adapt the material and concepts to their local needs. Kinda "if-fy," but it does offer some promise.

In The Next Issue: Advertising (Part II).

So far, we've discussed types of advertising, concepts and strategy. In the next two issues, we'll get into the nitty-gritty of putting it all together—what goes into a good advertisement, where should you advertise, should you use color, what size ad, should you use an outside agency. We'll even give you an insight into our business. And you'll find (not surprisingly) that we, too, have our share of "cow traders." 