

# The Stuff of Successful Advertising

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Take a chance. It's the stuff that success is made of. Play it safe and you can bet someone will be out ahead of you all the time; some will get so far in front that you can never hope to catch up.

You can breed all your cows to the popular proven bulls and never make a mistake. But the breeder who takes a chance

advertising people, to let them create original, relevant, telegraphic and persuasive advertising. Does this advice apply to most of you who don't use advertising agencies to create your advertising? Absolutely!

If you are like most registered Angus breeders, you don't develop and write your advertising in a vacuum. You work with

series featured a butcher in a white smock looking across a packing house box at a grown elephant. The headline read, "Packers don't want to box elephants."

The idea came from Bob Watkins, who worked for an advertising agency that was doing its first work for the American Angus Association. Bob and the agency didn't know us and we didn't know them. As a result, Watkins not only prepared the dramatic elephant ad campaign to show us, he also prepared a "safe" conventional campaign, just in case we were unwilling or unable to take a chance.

Fortunately, the Association staff and the Board of Directors didn't shy away from the controversial advertising program. The Elephant Ad campaign ran for two years. It offended some people in most of the other breeds, and almost everyone else who thought that IO-frame cattle were the wave of the future and that EPDs were a fad that would eventually pass.

But it was truthful and made people stop, think and act. Consequently, the campaign proved to be dramatically successful. It helped bring some sanity back into the cattle business and it marked the beginning of the dramatic comeback in the acceptance of Angus cattle by the commercial industry.

Had the staff and Board turned down the elephant ads, I know that the decline in Angus registrations would still have ended and we would have enjoyed new growth. But the turn-around wouldn't have been as fast or as dramatic had the Association not taken the chance that produced the most powerful, most effective advertising campaign the livestock industry had ever seen.

So when it comes to your advertising, loosen up a little. Don't worry about making a mistake. Take a chance, especially if it could lead to advertisements that provoke, that interest, that communicate, that make people stop and read or listen, and remember and act. It's the stuff that successful advertising is made of.



and tries yearling bulls with all the right genetics, but no track record and only interim EPDs, may make the most progress. This breeder will also make the most mistakes.

The same theory works in advertising. Safe advertising is the most costly type of advertising because it doesn't get noticed, it doesn't get read or listened to, and as a result it doesn't influence people.

Raj Marwah, an international advertising expert, contends that safe advertising is dangerous advertising. In his book *Understanding Advertising*, he writes that safe advertising is "Dangerous because you are in the danger of wasting your money as the ad dies — unnoticed and unsung and unheard."

Marwah advises his clients to trust their

advertising sales people, publication artists, family members, friends and others to create your advertising program and the individual ads. When you do, encourage them and yourself to be creative.

Don't be afraid of what appears to be "wild" ideas. Unorthodox approaches to communication can be the most productive and effective. Open up and let the wild ideas flow. Also write them down or record them on tape so you won't forget.

Finally, and just as important, don't be afraid to use these ideas, especially if they can effectively communicate your main selling point to potential customers in an interesting, believable and original way.

Do you remember the American Angus Association's "Elephant" ads? They ran more than a decade ago. The first one in the

