

# MERCHANDISING



When you plan or design an ad for your Angus operation, keep one thing in mind—Less Is More.

More ads have been ruined in the name of getting more for your money than probably any other single thing. The logic usually follows these lines:

- "If one picture is good, then two will show the potential buyer twice as much."
- "That extra white space could be put to more efficient use with another headline and a block of copy."
- "If I am paying \$100 extra for color, then let's get our money's worth and use a lot of it."

The results of this kind of thinking, as you well know, are ads crammed with photographs that provide no comforting white space on which the eye can rest or that smear color across the page to the point of producing nausea. And, a cluttered ad that offends the eye and is difficult to read gets ignored—it's as simple as that.

Of brevity, a wise individual once said, "If you would be pungent, be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed, the deeper they burn."

In these columns, we have talked about both ad illustrations and copy. But it bears repeating that two or three well-thought-out and well-written paragraphs of copy beat a double page spread of screaming headlines and bold sub-heads. There is little use in calling attention to an advertisement at all unless it has something interesting, intelligent and useful to say to the reader. Attention can be gained with one good headline and one good illustration.

It may well be true that one picture is worth a thousand words. But two pictures in an ad are worth half as much and with four photographs you communicate almost nothing. Less Is More.

We haven't talked a lot about color in advertising. We will one of these

months, but it's enough to know that color must be an integral part of the advertisement. If the ad is designed for color, then it can make the ad more attractive and readable. Some ads are designed for a touch of color to provide just the proper accent. Other ads may have need of a full color background to be most effective. But an ad can't be improved by the indiscriminate spreading of color across its face like icing on a cake.

I'm often asked what kind of ads I really like. Well, there happened to be two ads in last month's Angus Journal (November 1985) that I admire. My favorite is on page 24. In a way, the whole ad is like an illustration; the color and the silhouette of a horse draw the reader into the ad. The headline creates interest and indicates what the ad is about. The copy is well written, provocative and interesting and ends by asking the reader to take some action.

The second ad is on page five. This

ad doesn't contain as many elements of an ideal advertisement as does the one on page 24, but it works well, mainly because it is beautiful and simple. The four-color picture is a work of art that is impossible to pass by. The copy, overprinted in black in the sky of the photograph, is simple and to the point. My guess is that it too will sell, and in volume.

Every advertisement should do five things: 1) get attention, 2) arouse interest, 3) create desire, 4) build conviction and 5) ask for action. The first ad does all these things well, and the second one isn't far behind. Both adhere to the principle that less is more—and prove it.

Director of Communications  
and Public Relations

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