



Marketing what you Make

**A conservative yet contrarian
guide for manufacturers, with
copious reminders of things
you probably already know,
and maybe a surprise or three.**

by C. Goff

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Despite appearances, *C. Goff* is a veteran of the electronic component manufacturing business, among many others.

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1) A simple definition for a complicated process.

Here's the situation: You own, or work for, a company that makes something. You sell your products to other companies, who use them in products that they make, or as part of their manufacturing process. That may not seem terribly glamorous in these days of the Information Age, but companies like yours are still what keeps this country running and people working. You've paid a lot of attention to making sure that your products perform as they're supposed to, and that you can turn them out at a reasonable price, but you've still got one more problem to solve:

How do you get people to buy your products?

Before anything else in the sales process can happen, you have to get prospective customers to call you in the first place, so you can quote them the great price and short delivery time that you've worked so hard to make available. They'll never know how good it is to buy from you if you can't persuade them to make that call. That's the simple definition of *marketing* as opposed to *sales*, which is the process that happens after you get the call.

And it's crucial to understand the core difference between business-to-business marketing and consumer marketing. Most consumer marketing and advertising is intended to create a *perceived need* in the consumer's mind. (Their job is to persuade you that you *can't* walk around the block just as fast in a pair of \$30.00 sneakers as you can in two-hundred-dollar "cross trainers.")

Industrial customers, on the other hand, *do* need the products you make, in order to make their end products. They're going to buy them from someone, and you want that someone to be you.

Marketing and selling your products can be complicated, frustrating, and expensive, but it is central to the success of your business. It's far too broad a subject to cover all at once, so we'll try to break it down into manageable pieces in the following chapters.

Note: The use of "he" and "his" in this book is in accordance with the conventions of written English, and is not meant to imply that there are no women who work in the manufacturing field. It's written this way for clarity, so please don't complain.

2) The future of industrial marketing is here ...or is it?

This book is the outgrowth of a series of articles that were originally written for an issue of a business newspaper that focused on the outlook for the future of manufacturing. So let's start by taking a realistic look at how you might have to change the basic ways you market what you make in the next few years. You've heard the pitches, no matter how hard you may have tried to escape them:

These new technologies are essential to your survival, and you need to get with the program right now so you don't fall behind in the race to the emerging global connectivity wired Java NetSurf interactivity ISDN HTML e-commerce bandwidth infobahn @@@.com blah blah blah.

For now, let's examine just the top two hypes, attempting to use a splash of the cold, clear water of objectivity to tone down the fever induced by the excitement of new (though admittedly cool) technology.

- **Should you have a website?**

Yes, but it's crucial to do it right.

There are finally enough users of industrial equipment who routinely use the Web for product searches that you can't ignore them any more. But that doesn't mean you should just open an account with an ISP (Internet Service Provider), secure a Web address, and upload the PowerPoint presentation that you take on the road with you as your website. (I'm not joking here. I have seen more than one website that was done this way.)

Far, far too many companies have Web pages for no other reason than that they think they should. Spend a few hours looking around the Web, and you'll see for yourself. The pages of the majority of manufacturers' websites just sit there on the viewer's computer screen, and don't do anything to encourage the viewer to buy anything from the company. Don't forget, you have a business to run and to make grow. Marketing tools like the Internet are just that—tools. They need to be carefully evaluated before you spend money on them.

This means that you have to decide exactly what you want your website to do for you *before you start building it.*

You can get as complicated as you want, but there are some basic purposes that any manufacturer's website should accomplish. If you think of the Web as a large electronic version of, say, *Thomas Register*, and you want your company to show up when someone is looking for the type of products you make, you'll have a good idea of how to start—you should already know what to say about your company in this kind of format.

Once a visitor arrives at your home page (usually by doing a keyword search on the type of product you make), your site should perform one of the same functions that a printed advertisement should: to select the audience. In other words, there should be enough information on your products and your company so the visitor can decide if your products are what he really needs.

If the visitor likes what he sees, your site also serves as a line of communication to you—he doesn't have to call you on the phone to get more information, because your website will have an

easy way for him to send you an e-mail message. (If you don't include this feature, don't bother wasting your money on setting up a website at all—it's that important.)

That is the minimum functionality that needs to be included in any industrial website. What you want it to do beyond that depends on your particular market and sales process, and it will have a great impact on the site's design and the cost of setting it up and maintaining it.

Here are just a few things you may want to think about when determining the scope of your website:

- Do you want visitors to return to your site periodically for new-product information?
- Do you want your customers to be able to make an actual purchase through your website?
- Do you want to provide downloadable catalog sheets and specifications, or just give the visitor an opportunity to e-mail you for a catalog?
- How much information do you want them to be able to get without involving your human sales force in the process?

It would be a good idea to do as much research as you can, including polling your current customers to see what they would prefer to see on your site before committing your resources.

Don't forget, the world is not entirely electronic yet, so (with very few exceptions), it's not a good idea to starve your current marketing resources for an elaborate website—your Web activities should be an adjunct to your current efforts, not a replacement for them.

Website design and operation is an evolving field, but the basic rules are well-established (and quite a few of them are similar to the guidelines for effective print advertising and catalogs). Keep these in mind, and your website will help enhance your image with prospective customers; ignore them at your peril.

- Do not, *under any circumstances*, let your site go live or publicize it before it's done. The absolute worst thing you can do on an industrial website is to have an "under construction" banner and dead (or unfinished) links to the pages beyond your home page. This *screams* to the visitor that your Web effort is being undertaken in an amateurish, haphazard fashion, and gives him the impression that your whole operation runs that way as well. Test your site *before* you put it online. Test it after it's up and running as well, make any changes quickly, but *don't* put up an incomplete site. It's far worse than not having one at all.
- *Art Director's Revenge* (see page 21) is even more dangerous in Web design than in print. Don't let your Web designer clutter up your site with such useless geegaws as flashing/revolving logos, artsy "welcome" pages that don't give the visitor any information, or counters (trust me, **nobody** gives a hoot about the fact that he's visitor number 1,322 to your site since last August). This is business, not entertainment, and your Web designer's job is to get your information to the people who visit your site in the *fastest* and most effective manner. Period.
- Don't use Java if you can avoid it. Not everyone uses Java-enabled browsers (and many turn it off because of security concerns), and your site may freeze the visitor's browser if you use Java applets and the user has Java disabled. *Javascript*, however, is not a problem.
- Don't use frames. They are irritatingly slow and can make navigation more difficult, not

easier. They're also a problem for people with small monitors. Speaking of which, it's a good idea to keep your page width to the default size for Navigator or Explorer, so your visitors don't have to scroll horizontally if they have a small monitor.

(The two items above are part of a larger caution that you should exercise using about any new Web design technology, such as cascading style sheets and Dynamic HTML. It's not that your site should be boring; the problem is that you don't know which browser your visitor will be using—and if it's not the latest one, your fancy site will look awful because the older browser versions can't understand the new languages and features.)

- Don't require registration—well over half your visitors will just go away without seeing your information if you do. Remember, your visitors are your customers (or you are trying to turn them into customers), and you want to make it as easy as possible for them to get information on your products. Requiring registration makes you seem arrogant—after all, would you think of forcing people to tell you who they are before you allowed them to look at your printed advertisements?
- Want to make people really hate you, and guarantee that they'll never, *ever* buy anything from your company? Make them register to enter your website, require that they give you their e-mail address, then send them unsolicited e-mail messages. Nobody wants anything in their e-mail in-box that they didn't ask for. Not even a polite note thanking them for visiting your site. Not even hot new product information. *Unless you clearly and specifically ask people's permission to send them e-mail, don't send them any. Ever.*
- Don't optimize your site for a specific browser or version (at least until Microsoft finishes taking over the universe). Think about it; do you design your catalog to be “best viewed with” specific lighting conditions?

(You have to live with the fact that your website will look different on different browser software [and different versions of that same browser], computer platforms, and monitors—it's not consistent like a printed piece. This drives Web designers nuts and will frustrate you as well, but all you can do is to make a compromise that looks OK all around.)

- Just like in your printed catalog, every page should have your phone number, FAX number, and e-mail address (with a live link to an e-mail popup) on every page. And don't forget to put your address somewhere on your home page—people still use the mail, and they *are* interested in your physical location.
- Remember these three words. Paint them on your Web designer's computer screen if you can. You'll be throwing money away if your website is not **fast** to load on the visitor's screen, **easy** to navigate, and if the information presented is not **useful** to the visitor.

There's more than this to successful Web design, of course, but if you follow the basic guides above, and don't lose focus on your website's stated purpose, it'll be hard to go wrong.

• **Should you put your catalog on disk or CD-ROM?**

*If you want to—but **not** as a replacement for your printed catalog..*

Don't even consider a catalog on a floppy disk—a floppy is so limited in the amount of information that it can provide that its utility is vanishingly doubtful.

A CD-ROM seems more attractive, especially when you look at the per-unit cost of replicating them, which has dropped like a rock in the last couple of years. For example, you can get a thousand copies of your CD for about a dollar each—including a printed label and a jewel case for each (amazingly enough, this is even less than you'll pay for *blank* recordable CDs in the same quantity). When you consider that a decent-size printed catalog could cost you five or six bucks a copy in that quantity, you can see some real savings—not to mention the reduced shipping costs when you're sending a CD instead of a two-pound catalog.

And unlike a floppy disk, a CD has all the capacity you'll be likely to need; it can hold up to 650 megabytes of data—giving you plenty of space for your specifications and illustrations, with enough left over to include a browser application to help the user access the information.

However, even this much data is useless if your customers won't use it. Besides finding out if your customers would use your catalog on CD in the first place, you should consider the fact that it takes longer (even on a CD with a good browser) to find a specific piece of information in an electronic catalog versus in a printed one. Unless your customer is in the habit of using CDs to look things up, he won't use yours.

And I can't stress too much that putting your information on the Internet or CD in a usable form is not a simple matter—you can't just take the electronic files used for your printed materials (or scan your current catalog pages) and write them to a CD or a Web page.

Well, yes, you could—but you'd be throwing money away because nobody would use them.

The problem is this: Although the same rules for making printed materials useful and effective also apply to electronic documents, the way to accomplish the goal is different indeed, requiring specialized skills and knowledge. For example, grouping products logically by function and making reference to similar items in a printed catalog is relatively simple—you put them together in a section, and add notes such as "*For non-ionizing glaxtons with power ratings above 32 kilowatts, see page 77.*" To do the same thing in a Web document or on a CD requires the services of someone who knows how to provide the navigation services (buttons or links) that point the user in the right direction, then take him directly there. These people don't work cheap, so be sure it's worth the investment before you take the plunge.

In conclusion: Yes, you should have a website. But, like anything else, you need to plan its content and functions realistically, and be willing to invest the resources required to do it right. And don't expect it to take the place of your current marketing activities, such as:

- Printed catalogs (including sales sheets, fliers, and brochures)
- Space advertising in trade magazines
- Publicity (Product and literature releases in trade magazines)
- Trade shows
- Direct mail

Each of these activities has its own set of complications, whether you hire an agency or do it yourself, so we'll discuss them individually in the chapters to follow. It's likely that at least some of the issues presented will be things you already know, but some may surprise you—and if any of them help you increase your sales, it will make our writing and your reading time well spent.

3) Industrial advertising 1: Developing a coherent message.

This may sound outrageous, coming from someone who does industrial advertising for a living, but it's true:

Advertising will not increase your sales.

Not by one penny.

Advertising will not increase your market share.

Not by one percent.

You heard it here first. Even though these are the results that most people expect from their industrial advertising, they're not going to get them. No matter how good your advertising is, it cannot and will not accomplish these objectives.

But wait. Before you start muttering disparaging comments and stop reading, think about your sales process. Do new customers just call you and place an order immediately because they saw one of your advertisements? No, they don't. They call and ask for a catalog, and discuss their requirements with your salespeople. They get price and delivery information on your products, look over your specifications, maybe evaluate a sample, and compare you with your competition.

Then they make a buying decision.

Given this, it's easier to see that increased sales and share only follow from what industrial advertising can actually do, which is to start the sales process by *generating inquiries*. That's the only thing it has to do. Everything else will happen if your advertising gets people to circle the reader service number, call or e-mail you, or send a FAX asking for more information. Focusing on this single objective is what will allow you to produce the most effective industrial advertising.

How do you make your advertising effective? It's one of those concepts that can be tough to execute, but at least for once there's a simple answer:

Promise the reader a benefit.

Every component of your advertising, from the central theme of the campaign, to the message presented in each ad, to the physical layout of the words and pictures, must be chosen for its ability to get the reader to believe that his working life will be improved by using your products.

There are three aspects of your advertising to consider before you start a new program or when reviewing your current one:

- **What do you say to the reader?** (What is the message your words and pictures deliver?)
- **How do you say it?** (How do the headline, text, and graphic elements of the ad help deliver your message?)
- **Does it make sense?** (Not as dumb a question as you might think.)

Let's start with defining the message. First, ask yourself this: *If I were in the market for this product, what could a company tell me about its product or itself that would make me want to call them for more information?* Have your salespeople who deal directly with your customers help you make a list of the answers to this question. You could even do a brief survey to help gather this information directly from people who use what you make. Then write out a list of the

things that your company does well in fulfilling each of the customer's desires. Be realistic and honest, because you don't want to disappoint new customers after spending all this time and money to get them to try you out.

This list tells you what you'll want to tell the reader about your company. Is your pricing aggressive? Is your delivery better than the competition's? Does your product do its job better than anyone else's? Think about what it was that got your current customers to start using your products. Find your strength, and tell the prospect how this strength translates into a benefit for him. *That* will be your central theme.

Before you or your agency can put your message in a printed advertisement, you have to decide what its physical format will be. You are the only one who can decide if your message needs a full magazine page to express, or if you can go with fractional page ads. You'll also need to decide if you want to print your ads in black-and-white, two-color (one of them being black), or four-color (also called process color).

This decision goes right to your budget, so you're going to want to know how to get the most exposure for your expense. Just about every trade magazine has a stock of studies that will give you an idea of the relative impact that color, size, and frequency have on an ad or ad campaign's effectiveness.

Again, it's your decision to make, based on the information you can gather, and your particular situation. But here are a few thoughts on ad formats and venues for your consideration. I'm not going to throw numbers at you, since the magazine people will be only too happy to do that; these are mostly my professional preferences—which may be in agreement with, or diverge sharply from, the advice you'll get elsewhere.

If you can afford it, always go with full-page, full-color ads. Size and color reinforce each other to help your ad get noticed. If you can't afford a full page, most magazines offer half-page "island" ads, which run in the middle of editorial material so your ad will be the only one on that page.

Of course, there are those who will tell you that trading size for frequency is to your advantage (in other words, their position is that smaller ads that appear more frequently will draw more responses than larger ads that run more seldom). I'm not too sure about this. More frequency does, in theory, expose your ad to more eyeballs (if you count by readership of each issue of the entire magazine), but will the smaller ad *catch* those eyes? I dunno. You'd have to run both kinds of ads, at varying frequencies, to really find out. Go with what you think should work best after you study the statistics.

If you run third-page ads, I'd advise you to make them in the horizontal format rather than vertical (most magazines offer both). The third-page vertical is only one column (usually about two inches) wide by 10 to 11 inches tall, which makes it very hard to lay out an ad that doesn't look awkward. At least for me; your agency may be able to pull it off.

One last note relating to size: Tabloid size (11 by 17 inch page) "product digest" magazines have become very popular in the trade-magazine universe in the last ten years or so, and for some good reasons. Many product specifiers (buyers or design engineers) don't have a lot of time

to read magazines, and these publications give them quick access to a lot of information on what's available, through both advertising and product releases. Second, you can run a REALLY BIG ad in a magazine of this page size, and have a good chance to get it noticed (not only because your ad is large, but also because the tabloids tend to be thinner than standard magazines—their smaller page count increases the chance that a prospect will thumb through the page your ad is on). And you can generally run your monster ad for about the same cost as in a standard magazine—at least that's the case for most tabloids in the electronics field. And they tend to produce a large number of inquiries.

No matter the size of ad that you run, you really should go with at least two colors, and go for full color if there's any way you can manage it. Black-and-white ads make you look like a piker, so trade off less size for more color if you need to. The prep costs from your agency shouldn't be too much more for color than for black and white—scanning the pictures doesn't take any longer to speak of in color than in grayscale, and the three more sheets of film and Color Key proof aren't all that expensive. Most of your agency charges are going to be in the design, layout, photography, and copywriting phases of the ad production anyway, so the extra film isn't a whole lot as a percentage of the total.

This is going to make me unpopular with the magazine people, but I think they need to stop charging extra for four-color ads anyway—all of the magazine pages go under all the color plates on the printing press, so the only thing that costs them more to run a four-color ad is some additional stripping work. Given this knowledge, you ought to be able to negotiate some of the color charges with the magazine salespeople.

* * * * *

At this point, you're ready to start looking at expressing your ideas in an individual advertisement. All print advertisements share common components, so let's look at each in turn.

Consider the headline. Every ad has one, and its purpose is to get the prospect to stop leafing through the magazine long enough to read the rest of your ad. You have about three seconds to do this, so shorter is generally better. Just putting the name or description of your product in large letters isn't enough. And unless your company's name is "Free Money" or something similar, it's a really bad idea to use your name as a headline. Promise a benefit here, like ***Reduce your operating costs by 30%***, and you'll get the reader to stop turning pages.

The illustration you use in your ad works with the headline as a "stopper." Fortunately, you don't have to agonize about this element too much if you can't come up with a stunning illustration—you can always fall back on the tried-and-true idea of "show 'em what you're selling." It's hard to go wrong with this approach, old-fashioned though it may seem to some people.

So you've come up with a slick, attention-grabbing headline and a sharp illustration that will command the reader's attention. He's ready to let you talk to him. Now comes the hard part: putting copy in your ad that solidifies the positive impression he got from your headline, and spurs him into the action of calling you for more information. Writing body copy can be the least enjoyable part of creating an advertisement (in fact, it's surprisingly hard work) but since it's where the meat of the message is, it's the most important single part of your ad. All the work you

put into coming up with a grabber headline and sharp illustration will be wasted if the copy doesn't follow up on the promise.

Your basic objective when writing copy is to just tell the prospect your story in an uncomplicated, straightforward manner. Pretend that you're in the reader's office, and he tells you that you have one minute to tell him why he should buy your product. Exactly what you say would depend on your specific company and product strengths. You might mention some specifications if they're a factor in the customer's buying decision, but you wouldn't list your products as if you were reading from your catalog—so it's best not to overdo product listings in your ad. Remember that you are trying to get the prospect to call for your catalog, not expecting him to read it in the magazine.

Be *very* careful with exclamation points. Reading your copy aloud can help you see why—copy with a lot of exclamation points tends to give the impression of a salesman pacing around the prospect's office, waving his hands in the air, and sweating profusely. And abbreviations sound pretty silly when read aloud, which will show you immediately why they should be avoided as well.

Don't boast without backup. The reason why "Ego Booster" ads don't work is that the prospect doesn't care how great you think you are; he wants to know what you can do for him. So if you say your company or your products are the best at what you do, be sure to add something that will back up that claim. If you can use testimonials from current customers, or mention any quality or service awards you may have received, do it. "They say" is always more believable than "we say."

If you get stuck, you could always just bullet-point your product's features and your company's advantages and let it go at that. This is not the greatest way to write copy, but can work surprisingly well if these features are the ones the prospect wants in a product like yours.

One last thing: Just like in ninth-grade English class, spelling counts—as do punctuation and grammar.

Well, we're making progress. Next, we'll discuss how to make sure the physical elements of your advertisements help deliver your message, rather than obscuring it.

(For examples of the good and bad advertisement elements discussed in these sections, see the sample ads on pages 27 and 28.)

4) Industrial advertising 2: Nuts and bolts of ad construction.

After you've figured out what you want to say with your ad's words, and show with its illustrations, you have to present them in a manner that preserves and augments their impact. This can be an agonizing part of the ad-building process, since so many aspects of layout are judged subjectively. The intangible nature of advertising's "look and feel" also make it the subject about which you're most likely to have arguments with your ad agency.

Fortunately, there are some characteristics of design and typography that clearly work, and some that clearly don't. Keeping these in mind will help you smooth this part of the ad creation process considerably. Some are obvious, but don't we all tend to overlook the obvious occasionally?

Starting from the top of the ad:

Don't put the headline in all capital letters. All-caps text is much less readable than upper and lowercase, and you want to get your message into the reader's mind within that three-second window you have to catch the reader's eye and make him want to read the rest of your ad. And if your headline is a complete sentence, don't capitalize each word—again, because it detracts from the readability. Script or ornate typefaces are a *really* bad idea in the headline.

Speaking of typefaces (many people refer to them as fonts these days), a good rule of thumb is to use a sans-serif face in the headline and a related serif face in the body (serif type is the kind with the little lines hanging off the ends of the letter strokes like the type you're reading now; sans serif doesn't have them). Most people find serif type easier to follow at length, because the serifs of each letter help lead the reader's eye to the next. Sans serif, on the other hand, is a little more immediately comprehensible in short messages like headlines. And don't fall into the trap of using more than two typefaces in one ad, just because computers makes it easy to do so. That makes your ad messy and hard to read, and is an obvious clue that your designer is inexperienced.

The purpose of type is to ensure that when your copy is printed in the ad, it can be read and understood by the reader. So make sure the type is big enough to read. This may seem ridiculously simplistic, but many industrial ads try to fit in too many words, and readability suffers as a result. Edit your copy down if you have to in order to make room for a readable type size. The type color should be in sharp contrast to the background color, and black type on a light, uncomplicated background works best. Reversed type (light type on a dark background) can be quite dramatic, but you need to have large letters in a typeface with thick letter strokes to make it work.

When you want to emphasize a point, you can use **bold**, *italic*, **bold italic** type or bullets (•), but extreme measures like outline or shadowed text from the computer's "type style" menu tend to just look goofy and don't print cleanly. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER SET YOUR BODY TEXT IN ALL CAPS. IT IS EXTREMELY HARD TO READ AND MAKES YOUR AD LOOK AMATEURISH. BESIDES, IT'S RUDE TO SHOUT. Don't use underlined text either, for the same reason. And see what underlining does to the p,q,g, and y in this sentence?

Text can be flush left or justified, except if your columns are very narrow—in this case, the

spaces between the words in justified text can look awkward. (The rule of thumb for column width is that your columns should be about 40 characters wide.)

Use *one* space between sentences; two is for typewriters.

The photography or line art of your illustration basically just needs to be sharp and not overwhelm the rest of the ad. And, especially if you're showing your products, be careful of gimmickry. There is, for example, a disturbing trend in the industrial electronics business of using product photographs lighted with oddly-colored lights—you see equipment that is made of aluminum, but in the picture it's screaming purple with a green shadow. Doing this absolutely does *not* “perk up” a picture of a visually unexciting product; it just makes the ad look like it was printed poorly.

Running text around illustrations can add a nice overall look to an ad, but be careful that doing so doesn't interfere with the reader's ability to follow the path of the copy.

The “footer” of the ad is an area where you have to pay particular attention to the rules of typography and clarity, and look out for Art Director's Revenge as well.

Don't *ever* let your agency's artist use your address or telephone number as a design element. You don't want to go through all the work of persuading a reader to call you, and then make it difficult for him to find out how to do that.

So don't put your address in teeny little letters, all-lowercase letters, or a hard-to-read script typeface.

The same goes for your phone number. All you want to do is to tell the reader how to find you, so cutesy devices like using “eurostyle” dots and spacing between the area code and phone number are counterproductive. (Especially the ultra-faux-euro-hip plus sign in front of the number. When was the last time you saw a “+” button on a phone?)

If your company has a European parent from which your ads are generated, do whatever you have to in order to get veto authority on the presentation of your address and phone number. That will save you from having an ad footer that looks like this:

Acme Rivets USA

Sub. AcRivCo Pty, LTD, SA.rl AG

Industrial-parkdrive 334

USA-13698 BUFFALO New-York

tel +1 3155 5 53 435 +1 3155 5 53 462 FAX

And it'll be buried deep within a listing of all thirty-seven of your parent company's worldwide sales offices, in 6-point type—even though you're advertising in a magazine with no circulation outside North America.

Don't put letters in your phone number. You or your advertising agency might think it's pretty cool that you can spell out your company name or product this way, but nobody likes having to hunt around the telephone buttons for three minutes to dial a phone call. Think about the last time you made a call to a number full of letters, and how irritated you got. You don't want the prospect to have a negative feeling about your company before he even talks to your receptionist.

Remember, clean and simple beats cute and fancy in the inquiry-generating race, every time. Don't forget to look at the ad samples on pages 27 and 28 for extreme examples.

5) Industrial advertising 3: Don't try this at home—or at work, either.

When designing an industrial ad, avoiding doing things the wrong way goes a long way toward making sure you do them right.

A good exercise to do before you launch an ad or campaign, or approve ideas from your agency, is to look carefully through the trade magazines in your field to see what other companies are doing. Tear out the ads that you think do a good job of getting the reader to consider buying the company's products. Compare the various elements of these ads with the concepts we discussed in the previous chapter, and you'll get an idea of why they work.

You'll also see an astonishing number of ads that don't do anything at all for you. Tear these out as well, and see how many of them contain one or more of:

The Seven Deadly Sins of Industrial Advertising

1) The "So what" ad:

This is the ad that doesn't say anything, so the reader's reaction (if he even finishes reading it) is, "So what?"

The most common form of this ad is easy to spot: The headline simply states the product that the company makes, or worse, the company name. The body copy goes on to list the company's model numbers—with a scant few details or specifications, none of which say why anyone should want to buy the advertiser's product. This kind of ad's not going to get you a lot of inquiries, because your job is **not** to tell the prospect that you make the product—it's to tell him why your version of the product is a better deal for him than the other guy's.

If you'd like to see the "So What" ad developed to its full limits, with a large dose of "Ego Booster" thrown in for good measure, keep an eye on your television. Every year or so, the chemical manufacturer BASF runs what may be the most mysterious series of commercials you'll ever see.

The first mystery is why they run business-to-business ads on *television* in the first place.

The second, and larger, mystery is why they run these ads *at all*. You see, the narrative of all the commercials goes something like this (loosely paraphrased, but this *does* seem to be their real underlying message):

We don't make diving boards; we make them springy.

We don't make car tires; we make them black.

We don't make glue; we make it sticky.

We don't make pillows; we make them soft.

We make the stuff that other things are made of. You'll never know if our products are in the things you buy. It's impossible for you to even figure out whether you're using anything that we make or not.

*In fact, there is **absolutely no way** you can make a conscious decision to use our products, no matter how hard you try, so this commercial can't influence you to buy anything we make.*

So why do we continue to spend all this money on these pointless advertisements every year?

Because we can.

Maybe BASF can afford to throw away money on ads like this, but I'll bet your company can't.

2) The “Ego Booster” ad:

Sorry to be the one to break the news to you, but your company name isn't going to make a prospect want to call you, no matter how large or prominent it is in the ad. He doesn't care if you're the biggest in your field either, unless being the biggest gives you the ability to do something for him that the smaller guys can't. Boasting without backup is worse than useless, because the high-and-mighty tone of “image” ads generally turns readers off right away. Your company or its products may actually *be* the greatest thing since canned beer, but the prospect doesn't know that, and he won't be convinced of it just by your saying so. Remember, he doesn't know you yet.

“Ego Booster” ads are frequently the result of a company's misguided desire to put out advertising for the purpose of “getting our name out there in the marketplace” or, in a term borrowed from consumer advertising, “brand awareness.” But think hard about this concept for a minute: Is just telling your competitors and customers that you have money to spend on advertising going to help your business grow? Besides, when you concentrate your effort and money on doing advertising that generates inquiries and brings you new business, don't you end up with all the “market awareness” you need—as a *free* side effect?

3) Dry Copy:

It also doesn't matter to the prospect how long you've been in business, or who you're a subsidiary of. Examine your copy closely to make sure that it actually says something, and is written in the same kind of language you would use if you were talking face-to-face. If you were doing that, you wouldn't refer to yourself or your company in the third person, would you? Imagine walking onto a prospect's office and opening your sales pitch by stating, “*For over twenty years, Acme Rivets, a subsidiary of AcRivCo International, has been supplying rivets to the most demanding customers worldwide. Big or small, Acme makes them all.*”

This kind of language is no more appealing in print than it is when spoken. Reading your copy aloud to yourself or your coworkers can help you spot dry copy easily.

4) Pointless Borrowed Interest:

Thankfully, the days of companies using women in bikinis in ads for industrial equipment are long gone. However, you still have to make sure that all the elements of your ad, particularly the main illustration, really have something to do with your product or message. For example: There is a company (I won't name names) that makes equipment that tests telephone signals. They ran some advertisements a while back that, believe it or not, featured a large photograph of *a guy in a business suit sitting in an oversized scuba-diver's flipper!*

Huh?

I am sure that their agency has an explanation of how the picture relates to their equipment, but it sure escapes me (and, I'd bet, most other readers).

5) Hackneyed Themes:

This one is the idiot cousin of Pointless Borrowed Interest. Usually, it's the result of a severe lack of imagination on the advertiser's part, or an extremely lazy ad agency.

Examples include:

- Ads with pictures of products orbiting the Earth (unless you happen to make satellites);
- “Our Family of Products;”
- “The Peak of (anything)” (with a picture of a mountain);
- “Large or Small, We (anything) Them All;”
- “The Biggest Little (anything);”
- “Acme Rivets—Not Just Rivets;”

and a host of others, especially any sports similes or metaphors, which are probably the most overused Pointless Borrowed Interest as well.

An example: A couple of years back, a copier company (a large one; you’d recognize the name) ran a series of radio commercials that featured various professional and college sports coaches trying to tell you in a barely articulate fashion about how the company’s copiers would be a “slam dunk” for your business, work like “true champs,” and so on. Can you imagine the fate of the poor purchasing agent who, when asked to justify his choice of this company’s copiers, explained to Upper Management that he bought them because “the manager of the New York Yankees said they’d be a real grand slam?”

If you use an advertising agency, and the best they can think up is something like one of these, fire them and find another agency *right now*.

Trendiness can become hackneyed before you know it, so be careful about jumping on band-wagons like the current “solutions” craze. It’s not *quite* hackneyed yet, but it’s getting old fast—everywhere you turn, you’re being offered, for example, “interconnection solutions” instead of connectors. You do want to tell customers that you can solve problems for them, but finding a different way of saying it will help you stand out from the crowd of “solution providers.”

6) Art Director’s Revenge: *Note: I didn’t coin this phrase (though I wish I had), and I don’t remember who first used it. If anyone out there knows who it belongs to, please tell me so I can credit it properly.*

Pity the poor Art Director who works for your advertising agency. Here she is, loaded with graphic design talent, and you won’t let her use it—no, you keep insisting that your ads be clean and simple. You wouldn’t even let her pal the Webmaster put an animation of your logo morphing into a tiger on your Web page.

But now you have a new boss. He thinks your ads are boring, and he calls in the agency’s Account Executive and Art Director for a meeting. As your boss expounds on his desire for new advertisements that look “fresh” or “bold” or something similar, you glance over and see a bright light in the Art Director’s eyes and a half-smile of anticipation on her face. Her frustration is about to end, because she’s finally going to be able to unleash the full force of her pent-up creativity on your next ad, all at once. At this point, it’s quite reasonable for you to be frightened, because your next ad will be the target of Art Director’s Revenge. Expect a lot of blocks of bright color and sideways text (with the words in all lowercase letters).

Try to stop this process if you can. Industrial advertising is about *products*, not about your agency winning design awards. Never let the layout or graphic elements stand in the way of the message. This may seem to be a contradiction of the idea that your ad needs to grab the reader’s

attention, but it's not—the stylistic elements of the advertisement can say, “Hey! Check this out!” without wrecking the ad's readability. The damage caused by Art Director's Revenge can range from a mild muddling of the message all the way to resulting in an ugly, messy, useless ad that just eats your budget and doesn't get read.

A good way to find extreme examples of Art Director's Revenge is to look at ads from European manufacturers—I don't know why this is, but it's true.

Art Director's Revenge is the single largest source of irrelevant illustrations and graphic doohickeys that draw attention *away from* your message instead of reinforcing it.

7) Illegible Text:

The prospect will never get your message if he can't read it. All the more reason to avoid those sloppy “grunge” typefaces you're starting to see everywhere. Using one of those grunge or heavy-metal looking typefaces in an advertisement for something like rivets will only make you look like you're trying way too hard to be hip when you know you're not. Picture a common sight from the late 1970s—a middle-aged, portly, balding guy wearing a purple leisure suit with a bright green shirt and seven gold chains around his neck, and you'll know what I mean.

Well, that's about enough negativity for now. Armed with all this information, and your own good sense, soon you'll be running solid advertising programs that bring you all the inquiries you'll ever need.

Next: *Remember what I said about advertising only being part of the sales process? We're not finished yet.*

6) It may only be an industrial catalog, but it's still literature.

Ah, this feels good. You've thrown a lot of effort into building and running an advertising program that works. The inquiries are coming in by the cartload, so people must be reading your ads and getting the idea that they should be buying from you.

Go ahead, relax and bask in the glow of success. For about five seconds. Because you're now faced with the job of following up on the opportunity that your advertising has created for you. And if you don't keep things rolling, all that work and money will have been wasted.

I think it's safe to say that very few companies handle inquiries well, and that's a crime. The job of responding to inquiries is tedious, so it tends to get shuffled off to someone who sends out responses when they have some slack time. Or maybe the inquiries are just sent off to the field reps to handle as they see fit. But think: Here you have the names of people who saw your ad and made some kind of effort (even if it's only circling a number on a reader service card) to tell you that they'd like to know more about you and what you have to sell to them. How you respond to this overture, and what you respond to it with, is very likely to make the difference between a sale and a missed chance.

Getting to the prospect faster than your competitors, and with better materials, will give you the best chance to turn that inquiry into a sale—if the prospect is interested in what you make, you can bet you're not the only source he's considering.

Okay, back to the subject. Although some companies arrogantly send inquirers just a card to fill out and return (making them ask twice!), the wise company will respond with a catalog. A hot-looking prospect might also rate a follow-up phone call or have the catalog hand-delivered by a sales rep; there's usually enough information on the inquiry slips for you to pick out the ones who appear to have an immediate need for your products.

Notwithstanding how you follow up the inquiry or qualify it as a lead, you can lose any hope of turning that prospect into a customer if you don't respond *right away* by sending him a *catalog*. Not just a sales sheet. (Not by itself, that is; you can package sales sheets with your catalog if the item is too new to have made the catalog, or if you want to draw attention to the specific part.) Not just another advertisement (in any form).

And you can *really* irritate a prospective customer by insisting that he talk to you on the phone in order to "qualify" for your precious catalog—just send the damn thing; even if you do *no* followup, the people who get your catalog will (to some extent) qualify themselves by calling for more information or a quotation if they like what they see.

Catalogs are expensive to produce, so you might as well get as many of them out into people's hands as possible. They don't sell anything sitting in your warehouse—just like airplanes don't make any money for airlines when they're sitting on the ground.

Your specific situation will dictate whether you use a short-form catalog (some people hate them, but for some companies they're indispensable) for general inquiries, or just have one main catalog for all purposes. Either way, remember that your catalog is one of your most important salespeople. It never sleeps, doesn't take vacations, and is always there for your customer when he needs it.

It's also the first in-depth impression your customer gets of your company, so it needs to look presentable and be informative.

A more thorough (and therefore more expensive) catalog can actually save you money in the long run, because the more information you put in your catalog, and the easier it is for customers to use it, the less time your salespeople will have to spend answering customer questions. Not only does this make your operation more efficient, it makes the customer more likely to go to your catalog *first* the next time he's looking for a product of the type you make.

A nice-looking cover is essential, but don't go overboard on making it fancy—like the main illustration in your ads, it's a supporting element. Since first impressions count, the cover should be varnished so the ink doesn't rub off, and a strong binding is a must. Most people want to be able to lay a catalog on their desk and have it stay open, or lay it flat on a copier, and you don't want pages to fall out when they do this. Always put your phone and FAX numbers and your Web address on every page to make it convenient for the user to find them. If the catalog is perfect-bound (the pages and cover glued rather than stapled together), put your company name or logo and/or your product line's description on the spine so they can see it when the catalog is in a bookshelf.

And, like it or not, many users put catalogs of similar products into three-ring binders, so drill holes for binder rings in your catalogs—*don't* listen to anyone who advocates leaving it undrilled to force people to store it by itself, rather than in a binder. I'll say it again—the most user-friendly catalog is the one that gets used, so details like this count. And make sure that the printing on your pages is far enough out from the binding that the holes don't go through any pictures or text.

Just like with advertising, be careful of nonproductive filler. The inside of the front cover is a good place to put a few pictures of your facilities (but not just a picture of the outside of your building), and maybe a brief introductory message. A buzzword-filled “Mission Statement” under a picture of your CEO behind a mahogany desk, flanked by flags, with reading glasses in hand, is useless because nobody reads it. This isn't to say you shouldn't have pictures of your staff or a broad statement you'd like to make to the reader; just keep it brief and to the point.

The first page(s) should always be a table of contents. You can break the categories of each group of products down as far as you have space for, but don't put the index here. The index (which belongs in the back of the catalog) is for looking up specific items by part number; the table of contents is for listing products by description.

You'll be putting page numbers here, so listen closely: ***The single worst thing you can do to a catalog is to number the pages by section (such as 2-35 or G-14) instead of sequentially.*** Even with thumb indexes, it's a *lot* harder for the user to find a specific page when they're numbered by section instead of sequentially. It's even more irritating to the user than phone numbers with letters in them. **Don't do it.** Just start with page 1 and go from there.

(The second worst thing you can do is to cheap out when you reprint your catalog by printing “NO LONGER AVAILABLE” over obsolete items instead of removing them. This makes you look really low-class; it's as bad as an “Under Construction” banner on your Web pages.)

You'll have photographs or drawings to illustrate your products, and of course they need to be sharp. You have an image to project and information to convey, so don't cut corners here. If product dimensions are important, don't try to drop dimension lines onto a photograph; use a separate line drawing. The lines of line drawings need to be at least 1/2 point (.007 inch or .2 mm) thick in order to print cleanly. Shading or modeling in the line drawings can give them character, but be careful this doesn't make them murky. And the dimension numbers should be typeset, even if you're scanning or shooting a hand drawing (which you really shouldn't do, anyway). Be careful of using files directly from your CAD system; many of those look fine when printed on a pen plotter, but some CAD programs don't produce good drawings when output to film and printed on an offset press.

Most industrial catalogs have the product information or specifications in tabular form. Here's another place where something that should be obvious often gets overlooked: You need to include all the important characteristics of the product in these tables, and list the items in ascending order *by a significant characteristic*, **not** by your part number. The user is looking for a part that fits his requirement, and you have to help him find it easily. *Then* tell him what your part number is so he can buy it.

Product catalogs are evolutionary beasts, so when it's time for you to reprint or add to your catalog, it's a good idea to poll your salespeople for the questions that callers most frequently ask about your products. That will tell you if there's any information that should be added so the customer doesn't have to call and ask.

Keep it clean, keep it informative, and always put your phone number on every page, and your catalog will work as hard as you do.

7) There's always more to do.

All this emphasis on advertising and catalogs might have given you the impression that we consider them to be all there is to industrial marketing. Not so. A well-rounded program includes several other activities which should be discussed as well. Fortunately, they're not quite as complicated as those subjects were. Their prominence in your marketing program depends on your specific situation, but most manufacturing companies will include all of them to some extent.

• **Direct mail:**

The return rates on direct (mass) mailings tend to be on the low side, even with a well-targeted list. But direct mail is not very expensive on a per-piece basis, so it evens out. Like your ads, direct mail pieces need to promise a benefit to the reader, and need to get his attention when he's leafing through his mail. Here's a trick to help you get noticed: Instead of the traditional trifolded mail piece, make it an 8½ by 11 inch page folded in two. That way, it will stick out of the stack of #10 envelopes that lands on your prospect's desk each morning.

Include a perforated return card (it doesn't matter if you make it a business-reply card or have the customer put on a stamp), and allow enough space for him to write large enough that you can read it.

Of course, the more tightly your mailing list is targeted, the higher your return rate will be. Most trade magazines will rent you a list compiled from their subscription database that is distilled to your specifications. Lists of attendees at trade shows in your field are good to use as well.

• **Trade shows:**

In these days of corporate downsizing, customers are busier than ever, so trade shows may be your best chance to talk to prospects face-to-face. A visitor to your show booth is one of the best prospects there is, since he must use what you make if he stops at your booth. That makes it important to staff your booth with people who can answer customer questions about your products right on the spot. This means you should forget about hiring a model to hang around your booth; your male customers will be distracted, and your female customers will be annoyed.

Trade show attendees are there to shop around and see what is available in products that they use, so you might consider using your product's name rather than your company name as the largest text on your booth. You should give pictures of your products much more space on your booth than descriptive text, because you need to catch the eye of an attendee who is strolling the aisles, and people comprehend pictures more quickly than they read words.

A well-lighted booth will, of course, catch more eyes than a dim one. Backlit photography has such a strong impact that it is well worth the extra time needed to set it up, if you can afford the extra cost of a backlit booth.

Light and color draw attention, but best of all is light and color with movement. A booth with a rear-projection screen for running a presentation is expensive, but if trade shows are a particularly important component of your marketing, it would be worth looking into. Avoid

presentations with sound, though. A lot of shows don't allow them, plus they annoy your neighbors and staff and interfere with your conversations with visitors.

If your product lends itself to demonstration at a show, have a demo set up. And always bring lots of samples to the show, since people like to touch and feel manufactured products as well as look at them. Also, bring enough of your catalogs so the visitor can choose between taking one with him or having you mail one to him. You *do* want to present yourself as a company that is accommodating to customer wishes, don't you? And when you get back to the office, be sure that followup on show inquiries is your first priority—even before your expense report. Show inquiries are far and away more likely to turn into a sale than any other kind.

- **Publicity:**

No, we're not talking about having an announcement of your promotion to Vice-President (the one you got because your advertising campaign was so effective) in the local newspaper. We mean generating new product and literature releases for the "what's new" section in the back of the trade magazines. You might be surprised at how many users leaf through trade magazines backward so they can go through this section first—they can get a lot of product information in just a little time. The only cost involved in releases is producing them, since the magazines run them free, and they are very good for generating inquiries. Literature releases in particular can draw even more inquiries than paid advertising, since users always want to keep their bookshelves up to date.

You'll also, after sending out releases in a steady stream for a year or so (but don't overdo it; more than one a month is overkill), have a nice base of inquiries that you can use to judge how effective a specific magazine is in reaching your target market. This could be pretty valuable information to use when planning where to spend your advertising money, don't you think? Don't forget, though, that "bingo card" inquiry numbers have fallen off sharply in the last few years, so *you* have to keep records on the people who inquire by phone, FAX, or e-mail—you may end up getting more of these than written inquiries.

Just be sure that your photography is sharp, your written release has all the pertinent specifications and technical information, and that the product really is something new and useful. The magazine editors who sort through the mountains of publicity that they receive genuinely do try to pick out the ones they consider of most interest to their readers—they are good about not being biased toward companies who pay for advertising space in their magazines. Be patient; expect that publicity will show up at least three months after you send it to the magazines, since the magazines always receive more publicity than they have room to print each month.

Next: *They do it on computers, so it's gotta be easy, right? Just push a few buttons and there it is. I could do that.*

8) If it was easy, they wouldn't call it work.

Jeez, Fred, these bills from our agency for the layout and prepress of our sales literature and advertising are outrageous! You know, I saw an advertisement for this PageWhizDesignPro software in a magazine the other day, and it says we can create award-winning designs right in house. Don't you have someone in your department who's got some artistic talent? Maybe we should spend the \$195.00 for this software and do it ourselves. Then the only thing we'll have to pay for is printing.

If you're a sales and marketing manager in a manufacturing company, and you haven't had this conversation yet, you probably will soon. The revolution in digital prepress has made it likely that all your work is being done on a computer, rather than with mechanicals on boards. (If you are still doing it the old way, you'll be changing over soon, trust me.) Although digital design and prepress generally save you a lot of money (and time) over pasted-up mechanicals, they are still expensive. Software companies aren't shy about using this fact to persuade you to try to eliminate those expenses by buying their software.

It's probably not in my best business interest to tell you this, but in some cases they can be right. You can indeed do your own layout and design work—but it is not as simple as it looks. This is an entirely different world from typing up a quarterly newsletter and printing it on your laser printer.

I should mention that I have no financial or emotional ties to any particular equipment or software companies; nor am I trying to scare you into using a company like mine for your design work. My only interest here is providing you with sound advice on what is really involved.

• Don't think it will be cheap.

If you think you can press that 386 clone that's been sitting in the corner into service as a design workstation, forget it. Preparing digital documents for professional-looking output is a process that requires serious computing horsepower if it's not going to turn into *The Project That Eats Your Company*. If you don't invest in the right equipment, you'll be sorry.

The right equipment, like it or not, still means a Macintosh (or Mac clone) system—Windows 98 or no Windows 98. I'm sure this statement will generate lots of resentment from Windows/Intel advocates, but remember this: If you're going to try to do the same job that the pros do, you need to use the same tools they use. There is a real, tangible reason for this, and it has to do with the fact that the imagesetting equipment that your printer uses to make film from your files operates on Adobe PostScript code. And the Mac is still the only platform that consistently generates reliable PostScript code. Files that don't output properly can get very expensive very quickly, since they're your responsibility if you're creating them.

You'll need a monitor that's big and sharp enough to prevent operator eyestrain (absolute minimum of a 17-inch screen, and don't forget the glare hood), and enough video RAM (or a video card) that the monitor can display 24-bit color if your literature includes color photographs.

You may want to look into buying a scanner if you use a lot of photographs, but you would be well-advised to use an outside service for scanning until you're absolutely sure you know what

you're doing—prior to then, you'd be better off using your scans from your in-house scanner for rough drafts. Color correction and conversion is still a pretty arcane science (actually, it's still more of an art), and even a lot of advertising agencies use outside specialists for this work. The people you go to for film output (whether it be a service bureau or your printer) generally do high-end scanning as well. The time you save will be well worth the money you spend.

You'll need a large and fast hard drive in the computer, a SyQuest or Zip drive to transport files to your printer, and buckets of memory (RAM) to make everything run right. Add a tape drive for backups (which you **will** do every day, won't you), an MO drive or CD-recording drive for archiving, and *always store a copy of your archives and backups out of the building*.

Expect to spend at least ten grand for a workable system.

- **Don't think it will be quick.**

Let's say you've got the right equipment, and someone on your staff who has expressed an interest in trying to do your catalog and ad layout work internally. You'll go out and buy a software package or two and look inside the box. You'll find some disks or a CD for installation, a registration card, and some manuals. What you *won't* see (and the software companies are careful not to mention this) is any *experience* or any *talent*.

Even if your staffer *was* born with artistic talent, learning to put it to use in creating digital documents takes time and education. Add the cost of classes to your budget.

The best software for page layout remains Quark XPress. It has a pretty steep learning curve, but is the standard for versatility and, more important, reliability. Remember, a four-color brochure could run you almost three thousand dollars in film cost when it's printed, so you want to do everything possible to make sure that the film comes out right the first time.

If your staffer will be creating line art on the computer with a program like Illustrator, or using Photoshop to work with scanned pictures, allow lots of time to learn these as well. Photoshop, in particular, is such an astonishingly versatile tool that it's likely that even the people who wrote it don't know everything it can do. That means it's complicated.

- **Don't expect miracles.**

Nobody who does this kind of work for a living produced great work right from the first day, so it's likely that your staffer won't either. His or her first efforts will be pretty rough. They will improve, but you're simply *not* going to get professional results right away—depending on skill level, it could take years before you see professional-looking work from an in-house effort.

If it really *was* easy, there wouldn't be so many people out there who do it for a living.

Remember, you're asking someone on your payroll to learn a very complicated and specialized skill—and probably expecting them to sandwich this work in between their other duties. I'm not saying they can't get it done, but if you don't provide them with the right tools, if you expect immediate expertise, and most importantly, if you don't allow them the time to learn, you'll be making an expensive mistake.

9) And, in parting...

So what have we learned here today? Although I've laid out an awful lot of specifics, the underlying message of this book is this: Business marketing, while not a simple process, can be easier and more effective when you use the same common-sense approach that works so well in many other situations:

- Don't lose focus on the ultimate goal.
- But at the same time, pay attention to the details.
- Look at everything you do from your customers' viewpoint, because doing what's best for your customers will end up being the best thing you can do for yourself. If you find it hard to put yourself in your customers' place, just ask them what they want—they'll tell you their opinion.
- Don't let anyone feed you any nonsense, or talk you into doing something that's a waste of time and money just because it's trendy.
- Know your limitations—you can't do everything, so call in a specialist if something is a little beyond your grasp.
- Try to have some fun with it, and keep your perspective. This isn't neurosurgery, so leave work at a reasonable hour and go home to see your kids.

Don't forget to check out the ad samples on the next two pages...

Our story so far: One fine day, Mannheim G. Schmeckelhammer (a.k.a. “Manny the Schmuck”) decided that his industrial fastener company needed to “get its name out there” in the nut and bolt world. So he called in his golf buddy, who owned an advertising agency with lots of experience in designing and producing supermarket coupons and Sunday-newspaper color inserts.

Manny’s instructions: “Make it bold, exciting, and graphic—I want to make a big splash and project a real image of my vision and mission. Put something in there for everyone. Have your art director make a layout that will really get noticed, and use this copy I wrote myself.”

Got what he deserved, didn’t he?

1) Yeah, so?

2) Watch the hyphenated lines. More than one in a row (or in the same paragraph) is too many. And see how hard it is to read all-caps text?

3) Hackneyed theme, anyone? (Besides overstating the obvious.)

4) Pointless Borrowed Interest, unless the company’s products are used in the helmet. (If so, the ad should say so.)

5) Lame attempt at hipness is also the only (almost hidden) indication of what the company makes.

6) I’ve looked again, and there’s *still* no plus sign button on my phone.

7) Your Web address (URL) should contain some indication of your name or product, but it’s a good idea to keep it as short as possible.

8) Long one-word company names with “intercaps” are getting a little tiresome, don’t you think?

9) Boasting is a bad idea, but if you insist on doing it, please at least watch your punctuation and spelling.

10) Who cares?

11) Who’s the girl? What does she have to do with nuts and bolts? Does she know someone who’s flying on the Space Shuttle? And why does she appear to be talking to the word “Thursday?” (Pointless Borrowed Interest *and* Art Director’s Revenge.)

1 SCHMECKELHAMMER!

2 SCHMECKELHAMMER[®] IS THE TALLEST FACTORY OF ITS KIND IN THE TRI-STATE AREA. ALL DEPARTMENTS ARE SEPARATED TO ATTAIN THEIR FUNCTIONS WITHOUT EXTRANEOUS INFLUENCES OR DISTRACTIONS AS MANDATED BY ITS PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER. WHEN YOU CALL, OUR PHONE RINGS!

3 ORDER RECEIVED MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY FROM 9:30 AM TO 2:30 PM, CENTRAL TIME.

4 YO, call us for BOLTS and we'll go like "Nuts, Dude."

5 WIN IN OVERTIME!

6 score that "extra point!"

7 worldwidedeb http://www.thesannahla_g_schmeckelhammerproductioncompanyincorporated.com (under construction)

8 ManSchmeckProdCoInc[®] SINCE 1992!

9 THIS IS WHY THOSE WHO "BOLDLY GO" WHERE "NO-ONE HAS GONE" WILL JOIN OTHER DISCRIMINATING PERSONS IN SAYING: ManSchmeckProdCoInc[®]—ITS "JUST THE BEST!"

10 The Mannheim G. Schmeckelhammer Production Company, Incorporated[®] has been in continuous operation since 1992!

11 *(Points to the woman's face)*

STYLE DESIGNATION	LENGTH	"A" DIMENS.	OPTIONAL FEAT.
MATS-32**	12 PCO	14	BEFFLE
890S-456	66+/-39/64	0.003mm	LG. SNK
321-098 (2)	7	0	(2)*
3-M-4-M-5-M	1-2 MLM	SW 34	BEFFLE
321-098 (7)	?	HEX	NONE***
890/4-456	8+/-6	1 YARD	SM. SNK
MATS-47*	3/8 PCO	CALL	FIN.***
1010101	SMALL	LARGE	MEDIUM
1442-37T-37T-37T**	AS ORDERED	B + 3	WHEN REQU'D
1442-37T-37T-38T	NON STANDARD	B/7	ALL

10 *M-10 OPTIONAL **NO LONGER IN PRODUCTION. ***SHP'D W/15-23: PERSNL D'TLS REQ'D

11 it's in our giant "BEST LITTLE" warehouse!

What happened next: This was a company that actually made very good fasteners (and was capable of delivering them quickly), but it went bankrupt after Manny spent all the cash reserves on space costs for the previous advertisement, including full-page runs in *Fortune*, *Time*, and *Esquire* magazines. After reorganizing, the company hired new management, who (having read this book) found an agency with experience in business-to-business marketing. They told the agency what the company did well, what fastener buyers wanted, and sent them on their way with instructions to produce an ad that would *bring in inquiries*.

This one ought to do the job for them.

- 1) You need to be careful with negativity, but it can work if you're drawing attention to a problem that you know your audience has, then showing them how you'll fix it.
- 2) Shows that the company understands the customer's desires.
- 3) Backs up the headline.
- 4) Shortening the name (and including the company's products in the name) should help with brand recognition.
- 5) If you've ever owned an MG or other British sports car, you'll remember how sore these made your fingers. And yes, *Dzus* is a real kind of fastener.
- 6) They don't need to tell you how good they are—they can let one of their customers do it for them.
- 7) Every ad should have a "call to action." They also use this opportunity to mention another benefit of dealing with them.
- 8) When you do something that is extremely important to people who use your product, you should say so even if you're not the only company who does it.
- 9) Every purchasing agent has felt like this at one time or another—they'll identify with this illustration.

Don't go nuts waiting for bolts.

With all of the various parts you need to make your products, fasteners should be the last thing you have to worry about.

But having an expensive product sit around waiting for back-ordered hardware can make those little nuts and bolts and screws and washers loom large in your mind.

So we've made it easy for you to keep your fastener supply situation invisible. We've tripled the number of items we stock in depth to over 60,000, so you can have next-day delivery of any standard SAE or metric fastener. And our high-speed CNC turning centers can produce any specialty fastener you need within five working days.

Good fasteners, fast.

Because we make everything we sell, our in-process SPC programs make sure our parts meet the standards you need, such as: •ISO-J-21 •MIL-STD-678 •ASTM-D-345, and many others.

Every MGS fastener ships with full certification and NIST traceability.

So call us today (or visit our website) for your free copy of our new catalog.

We'll also give you details of our unique **Site Stock** program, which provides for automatic replenishment of your stock of the fasteners you use the most.

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 1234 Maple St.
 Cedar Grove City, IA 33033
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 www.mgs.com
 e-mail: info@mgs.com

Nuts • Bolts • Screws • Anchors • Washers • Camlock • Dzus • Lift Dot
 Boeing Vendor of the Year 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997