Ogilvy
on Advertising

"The shortage of print expertise presents an excellent opportunity for copywriters and art directors who take the opportunity to acquire the knowledge." - David Ogilvy

Ogilvy says of his writing, "[it] will uncork what I have learned about print advertising. I never cease to be struck by the consistency of consumer reactions to different kinds of headline, illustration, layout and copy."

Below are a few of the tips that you will find, along with illustrations and examples, in *Ogilvy on Advertising.*

Headlines

Headlines that contain news are sure-fire. The news can be the announcement of a new product, an improvement in an old product, or a new way to use an old product.

- Headlines of ten words sell more merchandise than short headlines.

- Headlines that offer the reader *helpful information* attract above-average readership.

- Include the brand name in your headline.

- Specifics work better than generalities.

- Put your headline in quotes.

The silliest thing of all is to run an ad without any headline at all.

Illustrations

The *subject* of your illustrations is all-important. If you do not have a remarkable *idea* for it, not even a great photographer can save you.

The kinds of photographs that work the hardest are those that arouse the reader's curiosity.

- When you do not have a good story to tell, it is often a good idea to make your *package* the subject of your illustration.

- It pays to illustrate the *end-result* of using your product. Before-and-after photographs seem to fascinate readers.

- Keep the focus of interest as *simple* as possible, with the focus of interest on one person.

- Photographs of babies, animals or sex most interest readers.

- People want to see movie stars with whom they can *identify*.

- Advertise in four colours.

- When you advertise products for use in cooking, show a photograph of the finished dish.

Body copy

Pretend you are writing each reader a letter on behalf of your client. Write in second person *singular*.

- Write short sentences and short paragraphs.

- Avoid difficult words.

- Do not write essays.

- Tell readers what your product will do for him or her, and tell it with specifics.

- Avoid analogies.

- Include a testimonial in your copy.

- Always try to include the *price* of your products.

Long copy sells more than short.

Layout

Readers look first at the illustration, then at the headline, then at the copy. So put these elements in that order – illustration at the top, headline under the illustration, copy under the headline.

A standard layout used by Ogilvy for years followed this layout: a large photograph, a headline of nine words, and 240 words of copy.

Ogilvy proposes this idea: "until you've got a better answer, you *copy*." Ogilvy states that while he was working in a London agency, he copied the best American ads. He later adapted his own style and eventually compiled his knowledge in *Ogilvy on Advertising.*