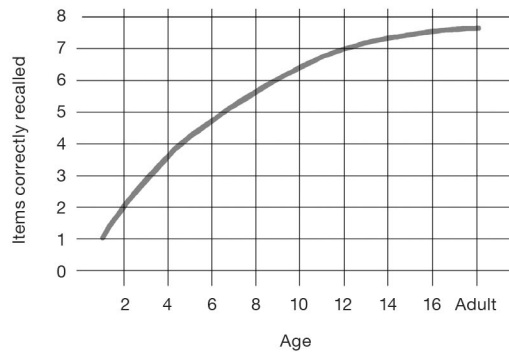


Art is the idea, not the image.

The visual product of an ad campaign should be aesthetically appealing, but the true art of advertising lies in developing intellectual insights into the behavioral, psychological, and cultural context in which a product or service is used.

If your hand skills are poor, you don't have to be a poor artist. Focus on developing insights and on communicating them the best you can. Trace, cut and paste, images; draw stick figures; carefully select the words that convey your ideas; and evaluate your ideas critically. If you do have strong visual communication skills, don't rush to create something that looks like an ad but lacks insight.



Adult memory can recollect a sequence of about seven numerical digits.

More choices are paralyzing.

In a landmark study, researchers Sheena Iyengar and Mark Lepper set up a table at a food store and displayed 24 varieties of jam. They provided a \$1 off coupon to shoppers who tried the free samples provided. On another day, they displayed only six varieties. The smaller display attracted less interest, but motivated sales at a rate ten times that of the larger display.

Psychologists believe that offering too many choices discourages shoppers from buying, for several reasons: it induces anxiety by being time consuming, it encourages shoppers to think they should make a perfect choice, and it asks them to keep track of more items than they naturally can. For similar reasons, menu engineer Gregg Rapp recommends that restaurants present seven or fewer choices per menu category.



A 2008 logo for Britain's Office of Government Commerce (OGC) was pulled after rotation was found to suggest an aroused man.

How many ways can a junior high schooler make fun of it?

Writing an ad is like naming a newborn: wise parents consider how others might ridicule every potential name. Before launching an ad campaign, brainstorm with everyone possible—including people not involved in the campaign—on ways to tweak, distort, or parody your tagline, ad copy, product name, commercial, and logo. Rearrange the words, syllables, and letters. Look at them in different fonts. Brainstorm the meanest, most vulgar, and most inappropriate memes. Mispronounce them. Create unintended rhymes. Sexualize them.

We need to sell more milk.



Ugh. Milk is boring.



It's good with a PB&J.



I don't like milk.



I do.

This assignment stinks.



The only time I think about milk is when I run out of it.



What?



got milk?

Insight on insight

An insight is not an observation or invention. It isn't a flash of inspiration or the pinpointing of a missing ingredient. It is the realizing of the essence of a situation.

The search for insight can be tedious and deflating. It requires researching, brainstorming, focusing, refocusing, sifting, resifting, doing, undoing, and often giving up in frustration. But in giving up, one becomes a stranger to his or her situation and may be open to a fresh perspective on it.

When it is eventually found, an insight will be both broad and specific: it will reveal a human truth or cultural-scale experience, yet will connect concretely to the product or product category. It will surprise, inspire, and provide clarity. It will feel like something you had not thought of before yet were aware of all along.

After the advertising campaign by Goodby, Silverstein & Partners
for the California Milk Processor Board, 1993

Lite 'n' Breezee

24-hour pads

Firckmeyer

Security Systems

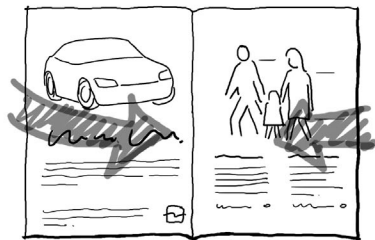
Crapmeister

German tradition. American brewed.

Top to bottom: MurrayHill Italic; GeoSlb712GreekXBd; Blackletter686

Font is tone of voice.

The font in which a message is presented is itself a form of communication. Lay out your ad copy in many different fonts, including ones far from what you expect to use, to see how it affects the message. A font thought too whimsical may reveal that you can be less serious than you had planned. A slender font might bring unexpected freshness. Italics may bring the quality of a parenthetical whisper or the urgency of motion. An exotic font may suggest exclusivity or handcrafting. You'll know you have found the right font when it doesn't feel like a selection but simply what had to be.



Energy oriented
toward the spine



Figure oriented toward
the call to action

Direct the flow of energy.

Arrange figures and objects to call attention to an ad's message. People, animals, and objects usually should face or be inflected toward the body text or call to action. If in motion, they usually should be moving "into" the ad.

If the placement of the ad on a web page is known, its energy usually should be directed toward the center of the screen. In a print publication such as a magazine or catalog, energy is best directed toward the spine. People or vehicles moving away from the spine may appear disinterested, as if they are "leaving" the publication, although this can be less problematic on right-hand pages, where movement to the right matches the direction one's eye and attention are usually headed.

As our brain processes images 60,000 times faster than words, we seek out imagery to shortcut the additional work that words require. If a headline needs to be read before one can make sense of an image, place and size the headline so the eye goes to it first.