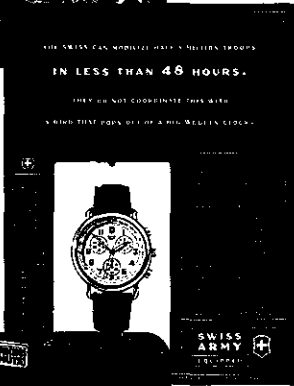
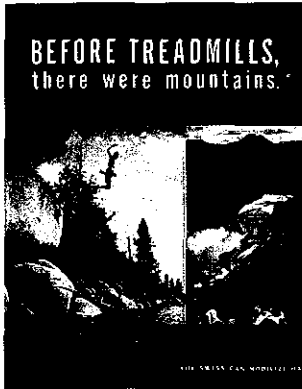
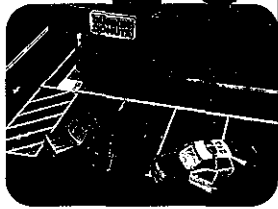


Communication Arts



Advertising Annual 40



**SOMETHING TO KEEP
— IN MIND AS WE CONTINUE
— TO SCREW UP —
THE EARTH'S ENVIRONMENT:
THE SPACE SHUTTLE ONLY SEATS FIVE.**

THE SPACE SHUTTLE... THE EARTH'S ENVIRONMENT... THE SPACE SHUTTLE ONLY SEATS FIVE.

THE "THANK YOU"
TO THE...
THE "THANK YOU"
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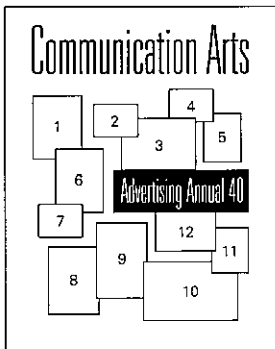
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Communication Arts

1999 Advertising Annual

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Volume 41, Number 7
www.commarts.com

COMMUNICATION ARTS, (ISSN 0010-3519) is published eight times a year (January/February, March/April, May/June, July Illustration Annual, August Photography Annual, September/October, November Design Annual and December Advertising Annual) by Coyne & Blanchard, Inc., 110 Constitution Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025-1107. Periodicals postage paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices.

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COMMUNICATION ARTS, P.O. Box 51785, Boulder, CO, 80322-1785. Via phone: 800-688-1971, 303-678-8475; fax: 303-661-1181 or e-mail: subscription@commarts.com. Please allow six weeks for changes. For back issues, please contact the editorial and business office, below.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICE: 110 Constitution Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025-1107. Via phone: 650-326-6040; fax: 650-326-1648; e-mail: ca@commarts.com.

POSTMASTER: Send changes of address to:

COMMUNICATION ARTS
P.O. Box 51785
Boulder, CO 80328-1785



Advertising's Overdue Revolution

BY DAVID "JELLY" HELM

Fifteen minutes before I met James Brown for the first time, I was sitting in the hotel room of his manager, Roosevelt Royce Johnson, at the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.

My partner, Stacy Wall, and I were planning to feature Mr. Brown in a commercial for Nike, and Roosevelt had invited us to his room to discuss Mr. Brown's marketing potential. Incense burned in the room, the maid was making the bed and Roosevelt had brought in stage-sized speakers so he could play us James Brown's latest single, coincidentally called "Just Do It," which he recommended we use for the soundtrack of the TV spot.

That didn't seem very likely because, although the song title was the same as Nike's tagline, it had a slightly different meaning. The lyrics, as I remember them, went "Just do it, do it, do it, do it...all night long."

Roosevelt told us about Mr. Brown's other marketing ventures, including two signature fragrances for men and women. The perfume was called "Try Me." The cologne was called "I Smell Good."

We went downstairs, briefly met Mr. Brown and joined the police-escorted motorcade towards the convention center. We arrived at the back door, and in a scene reminiscent of the nightclub entrance in *Goodfellas*, we snaked our way through the bowels of the building towards the dressing room. Lining the sides of the hallway, shoulder to shoulder, were all the convention center employees, in uniform, standing at attention and saying, one by one, "Good evening Mr. Brown, Hello Mr. Brown."

After a blistering show, we returned backstage to present the storyboards to Mr. Brown. First we had to wait for what seemed to be his standard post-show routine of going over the performance with the eighteen or so members of the band, discussing where the mistakes were made and cues were missed. Tightening the screws of a show that was already very tight.

It's dangerous meeting legends, they can only disappoint, but an hour-and-a-half with James Brown revealed an intense, warm, sincere, intelligent man. I was already floating before he remarked to me, "You have a broadcasting voice. You ever done any broadcasting?" No, not really. "Radio? Disk jockey? MC?" No, I said, becoming embarrassed.

Stacy interrupted: "He sang in a rock band."

James slapped his hand on the table, pointed at me and erupted, "I knew it! You got the FEELING!"

Advertising can be such a fun business.

I love the people. Some of the smartest, funniest, kindest, most creative, most alive people I've met are from the ad industry. Five of the people in my wedding party are people I met in the business. Including the woman in the white dress.

Advertising is rewarding in its ability to let you express yourself. Something about the act of creating something and then sharing it with the world. Industrial designer Victor Papanek compared it to the feeling of building, and then flying a kite.

Advertising is expanding. I'm part of the first generation of my family to live outside of Kentucky.

Advertising is a bit of a paradox. While it is a wonderfully fruitful, stimulating and rewarding way to make a living, it is also increasingly criticized. While thousands of people find our work entertaining, a growing number find it disturbing.

In a recent Princeton poll, advertising ranked 25th of 26 professions based on ethics and honesty.

Adbusters is a thriving—if niche—magazine that sets out to "galvanize resistance against those who would...diminish our lives."

Critical looks at advertising are cropping up more frequently in mainstream magazines such as *Harper's*, *Newsweek* and *People*.

Why do people criticize us? Are we allowed to ask?

I had thirteen years of Catholic education so I know a little bit about unacceptable questions.

In fourth grade we studied Adam and Eve and their two boys, Cain and Abel. "Where did Cain and Abel find girlfriends?" I discovered this was an unacceptable question.

When they were willing to hear questions, the answers often weren't very satisfying.

In a discussion about the afterlife in sophomore Scripture class, I asked whether Jews and Protestants who lived good lives got to go to heaven. Fr. Springman didn't have to think long for the answer.

"In heaven, God has a beautiful mansion. God sits in the living room with the Catholics gathered around his feet. Jews sit on the porch."

Little pink riding hood
 All that glitters is not taube
 Something old, something new, something borrowed, something teal
 The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence
 Into the wild, yonder
 Roses are red, violets are blue
 Being the better person

When close enough just isn't good enough

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Go further™

MULTIMEDIA

We can do a better job asking ourselves tough questions and attempting honest answers.

As we stare into the next millennium, it is important to look with a critical eye at what we do, its effects on the world and how we can do our job better.

For the next few pages, let's say there are no unacceptable questions and do our best to examine the issues with an open mind.

I might add that after school I encountered more than a few Catholics who were very willing to entertain tough questions. Doubt, as one priest friend of mine told me, either exposes false gods or strengthens one's faith.

So why is advertising increasingly criticized?

One reason, I'm convinced, is because there's so much of it. Of course there are more magazine, outdoor, TV and radio ads than ever, but the latest category is "guerrilla media," also known as "ambient advertising," or as a friend of mine calls it, "vandalism."

As an ad person, putting a "got milk?" sticker on bananas seemed creative, but the idea didn't seem so clever when I brought one of those bananas home last week. It felt intrusive, which of course was what it was meant to be. Does anyone like advertising on their food?

The *Wall Street Journal* reported Pizza Hut's plans to project their logo on the moon with lasers. They were dissuaded not by common sense or good taste, but because it was technically impossible.

It's all part of a trend where more and more public space is becoming privatized.

Between the stickered bananas and the ads over the urinals and on the floor of our supermarkets, we're exposed to 3,000 commercial messages a day. That's one every fifteen seconds, assuming we sleep for eight hours, and I'd guess right now there's someone figuring out how to get to us while our eyes are closed.

The average American sees 150,000 TV spots in their lifetime. And if you've judged *The One Show*, you can double that number.

Advertising is a 450 billion dollar business. That's just media advertising. When you throw in packaging, point of purchase and direct mail, it's closer to a trillion dollars. This *blitzkrieg* of advertising is relatively new.

Since 1935, advertising spending has increased eight times. Much of that growth was in reaction to America's new techniques of mass production, which required mass consumption.

In 1959, retailing analyst Victor Lebow wrote in the *Journal of Retailing*: "Our enormously productive economy..."

demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption. We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever increasing rate."

And so, advertising evolved from being a relatively passive source of information to a persuasive tool to help manufacture desire for products. Advertising expenditures and consumption have steadily risen together.

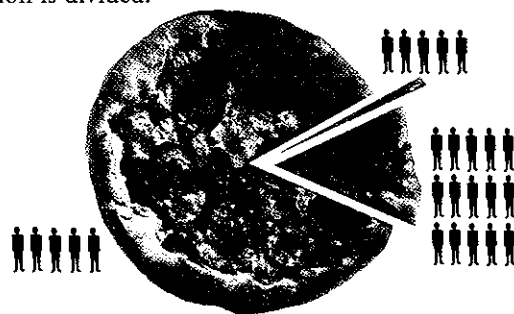
This may be getting closer to the reason advertising is criticized: Our role in helping to create a consumer economy.

Since 1950, Americans have consumed as much as all of the world's peoples who have ever lived. Our economy depends on it. Two-thirds of our gross domestic product is consumer driven. Our consumer economy has helped create a world of abundance that has been very good for a lot of people. Not just everyone in our business. Virtually everyone in our country, and every industrial country, has reaped rewards from our consumer economy.

According to the *1998 UN Human Development Report*: "More people are better fed and housed than ever before. Living standards have risen to enable hundreds of millions to enjoy housing with hot water and cold, warmth and electricity, transport to and from work—with time for leisure and sports, vacations and activities beyond anything imagined at the start of the century."

Unfortunately, this describes only a small part of the world. And the disparities are deep.

I've created a pie chart—a pizza pie chart, because I find it easy to relate to—that shows the way personal consumption is divided.



Personal Consumption Expenditures (Source: UN Development Programme)

The fifth of people in the wealthiest industrial nations—U.S., Europe, Japan and Australia—account for 86% of total private consumption expenditures. The middle three-fifths account for 12.7% of the spending. The bottom fifth account for 1.3%.

The richest fifth consume 58% of the world's energy, 65% of the electricity, 87% of the cars, 74% of the telephones, 46% of the meat and 84% of the paper. In each of these areas, the share of the bottom fifth is in single digits.

Crane's®

Elegance. Quality. 100% Cotton. Get a feel for Crane's.

Some immediately see a problem there. The disparity is too wide to be equitable. It's not fair.

But suppose you look at this in another way. Suppose you see this pizza not as finite, but as a step along the way towards a superabundant world? One day, can't everyone have the TVs, cell phones, SUVs, videogames and mega-malls that we have?

Simply put, no.

To understand why, we have to look at the idea of sustainability. In a sustainable system, consuming doesn't deplete or permanently damage resources.

Thirty years ago the environmentalists warned us we were going to run out of oil, or non-renewable resources. Good news: We haven't.

The bad news is that the way we are consuming hurts the world in two other ways:

First, we're overusing renewable resources. Things like water, fish and wood. We're using them faster than the earth is able to regenerate them. We're cutting down trees too fast; we're overgrazing too much land; we're over-fishing.

Second, we're overextending the earth's sink capacity.

The earth has a natural ability to absorb waste, as long as we don't push it to do more than it can handle. Consuming as much as we do creates an enormous amount of stuff, gas and solid waste.

What about recycling?

Recycling is a good idea, and it makes us feel good, but it doesn't touch the problem. Most of the waste comes from the manufacturing, packaging, distribution and disposal of what we use—things beyond our control. Per capita waste has increased three-fold since 1980.

Basically, it won't work to keep going the way we're going. We can't sustain it.

If everyone consumed the way Americans do, we would need four more earths. We've reached our limit.

Many of the people working on this dilemma, scientists and sustainability experts, have arrived at a common solution. If we compare their solution to where we are headed as an industry, it may hold the answer to why we're targeted by critics.

Let's look at the pizza chart in a different way. This is the way Alan Durning of the Worldwatch Institute analyzed the division.

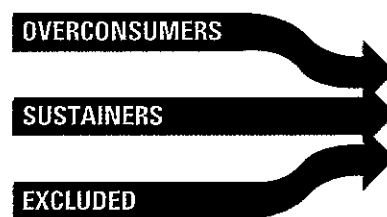


The Overconsumers are the 20% of the people living in industrial countries. They're the ones consuming at a rate that cannot be sustained.

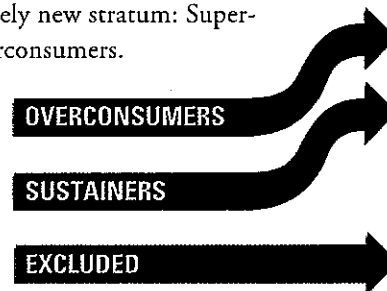
The Sustainers are the middle 60%. They have electricity, clean water, adequate food. They have fewer cars, and depend more on public transportation. They're not deprived. And their style of living does not threaten the earth.

The Excluded are the bottom 20%. They have very limited, and in some cases no access to clean water, safe food, shelter and health care. Because of their dependency on the land, they also deplete resources in an effort to survive. So, surprisingly, their style of living also threatens the earth.

In order to create a sustainable system, the bottom 1.1 billion people must increase their consumption levels, the middle 3.3 billion must continue down the same road and the top 1.1 billion need to consume in more appropriate, responsible ways.



In fact, if we look at where our industry is heading, we ignore the Excluded, encourage the Sustainers to join the Overconsumers, while pushing the Overconsumers to an entirely new stratum: Super-duper-overconsumers.



Despite being keenly aware that we live on a finite planet, with a limited amount of resources, we continue to perpetuate a world-view of continuous, unlimited and ever-expanding consumption. We continue to encourage runaway spending, in direct opposition to the sort of action recommended to get us out of the mess we're in.

That's how ecologists and scientists are looking at it. Let's look at advertising from a sociologist's view.

Advertising apparently works. We're spending more than ever. Yet somehow we're not keeping up.

The social demands of spending rise faster than our income. A Roper Center poll revealed that the amount of annual income required so that you can "fulfill your dreams" doubled between 1987 to 1994.

Luxuries have become "necessities."

Get down to business.



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As my wife and I try to build a home together, we've discovered that there are standard items which we're almost expected to own, the required trappings of being a young American couple: an answering machine, a cordless phone, at least one television, cable TV, a VCR, a stereo, cassette player and CD player, a microwave, dishwasher, washer and dryer, air conditioning, two cars.

Owning these things would have made you the talk of the neighborhood barely a generation ago. Now you stand out by not having them.

Trying to keep up has its costs. Credit card debt is at the highest ever, doubling from 1990 to 1996. Household savings are at the lowest point ever, one-fourth of what they were fifteen years ago.

Do you know how many households making more than \$100,000 say they can't afford everything they really need? Twenty-seven percent.

How much is advertising responsible for this?

Let's examine the way advertising works, the process that goes on in the mind of a person targeted by our ads.

Advertising's goal, of course, is to make you want something. To create desire. That begins by making you unhappy with what you currently have, or don't have. Advertising widens the gap between what you have and what you want.

Wanting to buy something, then, is a response to the feelings of dissatisfaction, envy and craving. A perpetual state of conflict.

It's on these emotions that a world economy and a dominant philosophy have been built, encouraging the act of spending to increase personal happiness, well-being and ultimately, one's identity. These aren't controversial ideas. They're merely a description of the process.

When I say advertising, I don't mean any individual ad. A particular ad can be entertaining, funny, touching or boring. We need to look beyond the emotional reaction created by a specific ad and look at the combined effect of the thousands we see. Advertising's influence comes from the common theme underlying every ad, repeated thousands of times, day after day after day: *Buying things will make you happy.*

When you build a system on a foundation of desire, dissatisfaction, envy and inadequacy, people buy things, yes, but it's no surprise that it happens at the expense of some damage to the psyche.

The dangers of materialism is one of the few topics virtually every world religion agrees on. Which tells me we should pay attention. It only takes two world religions to agree to keep me from eating pork.

And if materialism's not bad enough, we are increasingly

telling people that their non-material needs may be fulfilled through consumption.

Essayist Jonathan Dee compared the sponsored art of the television commercial to the Russian art form of Social Realism. "Capitalist Realism amounts to an insistent portrait of the world as a garden of consumption in which any need—no matter how anti-material, how intimate, or how social—can be satisfied by buying the right things."

Increasingly, account planning means applying anthropologists' tools to determine deep human longings—freedom, belonging, fulfillment, power, love—and showing how our clients' products can fulfill those needs.

In a speech to the AAAA this year, the chairman of the Interpublic Group admitted that "the people who sell you sport utility vehicles are selling you the means to go anywhere you like. You're almost certainly not going to go there. But you are going to feel pretty powerful. They're putting you in the Power Business, the Feel Good Business."

To claim that a particular brand of SUV will make you more powerful is not exactly a lie, but as Jonathan Dee wrote, it's "a kind of truthlessness."

In perpetuating that truthlessness, in telling people it's not who you are, it's what you own, advertising distorts something essential about ourselves, something invisible, but possibly the most important aspect of our humanity.

Ecologic and social unsustainability, materialism, spiritual damage. What do we have to say about this?

My first response, when confronted with the effects of over-consumption and my involvement as someone in advertising, was utter denial. I never in my life intended to widen the inequality gap or misuse natural resources or create a world hooked on junk. Furthermore, I've never even met a person who has!

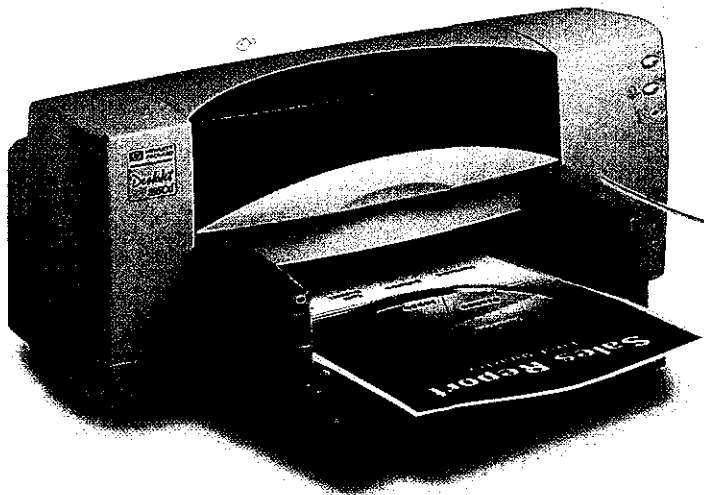
We are good people. None of us, as far as I can tell, intended for this to happen. I just wanted to meet James Brown! How did it get so out of hand?

When cars first came out, people thought of them as clean transportation, because horse manure didn't come out of the tail pipe. But the auto business quickly learned they weren't as clean as they originally thought.

Advertising's not as clean as we originally thought.

I disagree with the critics who think that people in advertising are creeps. My research, conducted with hundreds of people, tells me that people in advertising are thoughtful, intelligent, idealistic, compassionate, creative. In short, all the traits necessary to do the right thing. Unfortunately, we are often paralyzed because though we recognize some of the shortcomings of our business, we don't know where to start to change things.

Mac Connect.

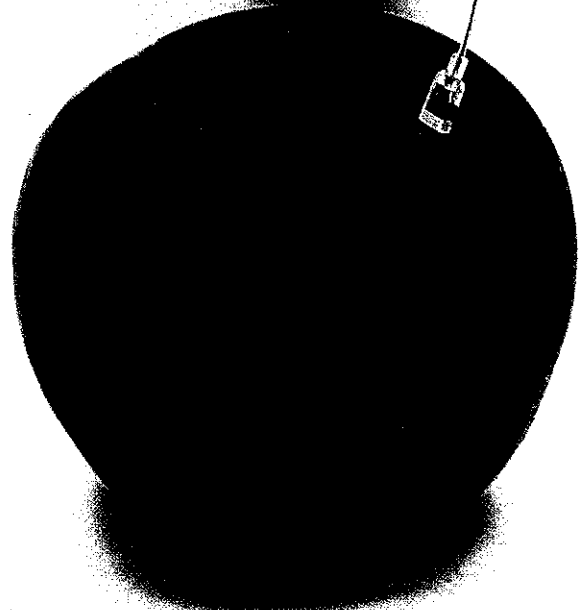
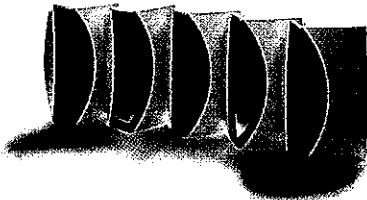


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Expanding Possibilities

A good place to begin is by confronting the fact that some of the consequences of what we do as an industry don't always line up with what we believe as individuals.

You might be thinking: "You're not criticizing advertising, you're criticizing capitalism. We're the tail of the dog. Advertising is simply a tool of corporations."

It is true that we cannot expect a revolutionary change in advertising without a revolutionary change in business. This has already begun.

Ray Anderson is the CEO of Interface, a \$1 billion carpet company that's part of one of the dirtiest industries on earth. By its own count, Interface produces over 10,000 tons of solid waste, 600 million gallons of polluted water and 62,000 tons of carbon dioxide every year.

Recently Anderson had an unlikely admission for his shareholders: "I am a plunderer of the earth. Someday people like me may be put in jail."

Interface, with the help of an environmental consultancy from Sweden called The Natural Step, is one of a number of corporations taking major steps to retool itself to conduct business in a sustainable way.

Among Interface's innovations, they created the novel idea of leasing their carpet, so that it could be reclaimed and recycled instead of ending in a landfill.

As Anderson said, "Business and industry have to change or we will take the Earth down with us. This is the next industrial revolution."

This brings up a critical question: Must we wait for our clients to take the lead? Are we simply the passive executors of our clients' wishes? Is there room in our partnership with business to play more than an ethically neutral role? Must we have a blind dedication to grow our client's business, regardless of the outcome? If our clients are leading us down a path that is not socially or ecologically sustainable, or harmful to human nature, do we resist, and how?

I don't think any of us like the idea of being ethically neutral. Every industry has an ethical code, a line not to be crossed, no matter the cost.

Economist and philosopher John Ruskin called this line the "due occasion" when it is a person's duty to die rather than go against a principle critical to his or her profession. What are those due occasions? Ruskin said, "[For] the soldier, rather than leave his post in battle. The physician, rather than leave his post in plague. The lawyer, rather than sanction injustice."

What is our due occasion as advertisers?

One man took a stab at identifying it. He ran an ad agency in New York. In one of the last statements he ever made, in the preface to a book he never finished, Bill said:

"You and I can no longer isolate our lives. We must practice our skills on behalf of society. We must not just believe in what we sell, we must sell what we believe in."

Bernbach's words are deceptively simple.

"Believe in" is more complicated than whether we personally like a product. A product must be evaluated as to how it effects the entire society, or community.

Beyond even choosing products we believe in, can we continue to promote reckless spending given the evidence of how it affects the health of people and the planet?

It seems to me, knowing as much as we do, we can't go back to our cubicles and merely argue about concepts. It's like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. In light of what we know, debating meaningless issues such as merits of East Coast vs. West Coast advertising has gone from irrelevant to absurd.

There's nothing wrong with improving creativity, debating techniques, holding conferences, but it must be done within a wider context.

What is most important to us? That we make our work more entertaining? Or that we make it more equitable? That we start another creative revolution? Or are we in need of a different sort of revolution?

We have made amazing strides in creativity, technique and economic growth, but how satisfying are these advances if we ignore or explain away the consequences of our work? Wouldn't we find deeper joy in celebrating our creativity if it existed within a broader context?

Don't we want to say, "I feel good about my job," not because we travel the world or have fun and win awards or because we work on cool commercials, but because our profession contributes to human growth and is good for the health of the community?

It's unrealistic to think advertising will start a revolution. Advertising isn't meant to set social policy. But advertising is very effective at listening and reacting to public will. And the public seems to be catching on to the costs of our extreme patterns of overconsumption.

In a 1995 Merck Family Poll, 82% of Americans agreed that "most of us buy and consume far more than we need. It's wasteful." In the summary of the poll's findings, the report's authors state: "People of all backgrounds share certain fundamental concerns about the values they see driving society. They believe materialism, greed and selfishness increasingly dominate American life, crowding out a more meaningful set of values centered on family, responsibility and community."

I don't need a poll to tell me this. Because I know, when it comes down to it, that the road of reckless materialism is unsatisfying to the human spirit.



ILLUSTRATION: JOE MORSE
Showcase Illustration Volume 23, Page 491

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american

showcase

The world is waking up. Maybe because of the millennium, change seems easy to embrace right now.

Change is easy for us. We can change in an instant. Unlike the changes Ray Anderson made at his carpet company, we don't have factories to re-tool, or technologies to improve or components to reinvent. We only have to change in our minds, and once we do, we've changed for real.

What sort of change do we need?

It's time to revise our industry's code of ethics.

In 1924, we identified our principles and wrote them up as the AAAA Standards of Practice. We must rejuvenate and clarify those standards given what we now know about the state of the world and our relationship to it.

The code asserts, among other things, an obligation to the public and a dedication to expressing the truth. "The truth" is tough to pin down, but it certainly cannot include promoting ideas or products that are harmful to the health of the planet or society at large.

I believe we all agree on this in principle, it's just a question of defining what it means.

For example, many agencies already take stands against tobacco, because it is easy to see the link between tobacco and the ill-health of the community. The link between other products and the ill-health of the world is often less obvious.

The *1998 United Nations Human Development Report on Consumption* helps clarify that link.

"Consumption clearly contributes to human development when it enlarges the capabilities and enriches the lives of people without adversely affecting the well-being of others, when it is as fair to future generations as it is to the present ones, when it respects the carrying capacities of the planet, and when it encourages lively, creative individuals and communities."

With that as a guide, I propose three clarifications, restatements, of our industry principles. The first:

1. Promote only those goods and services that benefit human development.

As I said, I believe we all agree with this in principle. None of us would promote cigarettes for babies or a home security system that uses landmines. But it's never that black and white. How do we determine something that seems so subjective?

To a certain degree, it will always be subjective, but there are questions we can ask:

- How is it made? Does it responsibly use natural resources? Does manufacturing it create unnecessary waste or pollution? What are its health, safety and environmental impacts?
- Is it produced equitably? Are the people on the

assembly line empowered or exploited?

- Is it distributed fairly? Does it benefit one group disproportionately?
- Does it contribute to the growth of communities? Does it help us meet our needs? Does it make us more creative? bring people together, strengthen people? Or does it isolate, separate people?

As we change our priorities from short-term gains to long term and carefully scrutinize our clients, customers have demonstrated that they're willing to meet us halfway.

Whether it's the increasing consumer support of fairly-traded coffee, which ensures small coffee producers are not exploited, or the recent student movement protesting sweatshop manufacturing of college apparel, which the *New York Times* called "the biggest wave of campus activism since the anti-apartheid movement in the 1980s," people are beginning to understand the inter-relatedness of their buying and consuming decisions and the rest of the planet, and showing that they are willing to make the right decision.

The second principle is also a re-clarification of our industry's commitment to the truth.

2. Refrain from promoting competitive, irresponsible, reckless consumption.

Advertising as a force to create false needs is a relatively recent phenomenon, tracing back to less than a century ago. Is it possible for advertising, while remaining creative and effective, to return to its original purpose of informing and educating?

If we are committed to the truth, we must ask ourselves: Is it truthful to promise that material goods will fulfill deep, human, non-material needs? Is it truthful to market high-cost status goods to the urban poor? Is it truthful, knowing what we do about the effects of consumerism, to continue to promote it as a viable lifestyle?

Can we sell without doing these things? It depends on which aspects of human nature we choose to speak to with our work. Do we encourage greed? Do we speak to people as individualists pursuing maximum personal gain to the exclusion of others, or as members of a community, a person whose choices affect a larger group of people?

My third proposal concerns the way we market to a demographic group that represents over 200 billion dollars of spending power. Children.

Our industry has had impressive results at marketing to kids. I recently heard a planner tell the story of researching the target audience for a lollipop commercial. The target was kids aged five-to-twelve, but her research had shown there were sharp divisions within that group.



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Five- and six-year-olds like bright, bold colors and busy things to look at. Seven-to-nine-year-olds like funny sounding words they can repeat. Bobbly-wobbly. Toodly-woodly. Ten-to-twelve-year-olds like seeing adults in foolish situations.

She showed us the commercial based on her findings and it unsurprisingly featured a bumbling, clumsy adult on a busy, colorful set, talking about the lollipop using funny sounding words like bobbly-wobbly and toodly-woodly. And, she reported, kids bought up those lollipops by the handful.

Armed with such sophisticated tools, the battle for kids' dollars is relatively one-sided.

According to an article in *American Demographics* entitled "Born to Shop," children as young as three ask for brand names. Six-month-old babies recognize corporate logos and spokesmen.

Psychologists tell us that to a child, all information is educational. They simply cannot distinguish between advertising and other types of information. And so it is impossible to "target" them without being, by definition, manipulative.

While some believe the answer is media-training for kids, I believe that the blame-the-victim approach puts responsibility on children instead of where it belongs, on us.

Commercializing the experience of childhood has deep consequences. Ninety-three percent of teenage girls say shopping is their favorite activity. As a society, we shake our heads and complain about how materialistic kids are, yet we refuse to see the connection between their values and our military-scaled marketing to them.

In civil society, we must put the welfare of children ahead of economic benefit. We must follow the lead of countries such as Sweden, Denmark, Norway and the province of Québec and:

3. Ban all broadcast advertising to children under twelve.

Whether we will take such a radical step depends on whether we believe this group holds more value as consumers or as children.

This is an ambitious call-to-action. Maybe it is unrealistic to expect that we would change a system that, at least in the short run, benefits us. But I'd like to think that all of us would rather participate in a system that is healthy and fair. I'd like to think that we have the capability to understand that our ultimate well-being is tied to the community's well-being, and that exploitative relationships which may initially benefit us will eventually cost us, either through a damaged planet, a damaged social structure or a damaged soul.

But how many people reading this have the power to implement such a dramatic plan in an agency?

Some of us do. But most of the people able to make such changes probably stopped reading a long time ago. "He's nuts. He doesn't understand reality. He doesn't understand the way life works." I wouldn't blame them. In their shoes, I'd probably say the same things. They're too invested to risk making any dramatic changes.

But on the other hand, you might be feeling bothered by some of the things I've written. You might find yourself a week from now, taking a shower, drinking a cup of coffee, and some of these ideas are still nagging at you. I would pay attention because that is a gift, as my friend Ken Hines said, the gift of hearing. It is the first gift you will have to put to use if you want to affect any change.

Real change will not come swooping in with the adoption of an oath, it will come gradually, as one-by-one we become aware of these issues and question our individual roles.

Your second gift landed you your job. Your creativity, your intelligence, your ability to look at problems in unusual ways. No one else is in the position to make as much difference on these issues as you are. Not social workers, not teachers, not priests. No one else has the creativity, the energy and the opportunity that you have.

As a person with the gift of creativity, confronting these sorts of issues is your heritage.

According to anthropologists, in primitive cultures and ancient tribes it was the creative people, the men and women who saw visions and could create artistic objects, who served as the conscience of the community. They were the priests and shamans. Your genes are practically commanding you to do something.

Where to begin? Look into these issues for yourself. Read the *UN Human Development Report on Consumption*. Look into the work being done by places like the Center for a New American Dream (newdream.org) and the Positive Futures Network (futurenet.org). Talk about these things at work. Have a conversation with your boss. Talk with your friends. Start a discussion group.

These issues are often bewildering. But the good news is that we don't have to have a complete answer. We just need to have a desire to earnestly pursue these issues, to seek a complete understanding of our work and its effects on the world. If we shine a light on what we do, I am confident that truth and our best instincts will combine to help us take the right steps.

As social activist and educator Howard Zinn said, "If we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory." ■