

# Advertisers at Work



*Tracy Tuten*

Apress®

## ***Advertisers at Work***

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*For David*

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# Foreword

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I went to the Cannes Advertising Festival last year, and as I was walking up the red carpet with the stairs lined with photographers and half the ad people in tuxes and gowns, I started thinking that Scorsese and Almodóvar walked up these same steps a few weeks back at the Cannes Film festival. Maybe they deserve the press and glamour and all that, but this crowd? No. At the end of the day I sell candy. I'm also a satellite TV salesman and a travel agent. The people I walked up the red carpet with at the Grand Palais were car salespeople and hawkers of sugar water.

So keep that in mind. In the advertising world, words like “legendary” and “genius” are thrown around a lot, but at the end of the day the only legendary thing these people did was design a nice computer store and sell a lot of milk.

The people in this book aren't strangers to fancy accolades, but I don't think they would ever use the word “genius” to describe themselves. What they would say is they work harder than most, they are always learning, and they are always in search of the “new.” And working harder and never being satisfied, regardless of how I make it sound, is quite admirable even if you are just looking for a new way to sell deodorant.

The hard working people Tracy Tuten interviewed for this book are the types of people you want to learn from. I know this because I have personally learned a lot from them. I have a long past with many of them. There are a few people in this book that I have worked for. There are some that I wanted to work for but they didn't want to work with me. There is one that I did get to work for but then they fired me. There are also a few who worked for me and are quickly getting to the point where I will one day be working for them.

And what will you learn? Work harder than everyone else, create something that has never existed before, and be very wary of tuxedos.

Gerry Graf  
Founder/Creative Director  
Barton F. Graf 9000, LLC

# About the Author

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**Dr. Tracy Tuten** is an associate professor of marketing at East Carolina University, where she teaches advertising and social media marketing. Tuten is the author of *Advertising 2.0: Social Media Marketing in a Web 2.0 World* (Praeger, 2008) and coauthor of the textbook *Social Media Marketing* (Prentice Hall, 2013). Frequently quoted in the press, including in the *New York Times*, *Brandweek*, and the *Washington Post*, she is a leading contributor to industry views on branding. An award-winning scholar, her research has appeared in such journals as *Psychology & Marketing*, and the *Journal of Business Research*, among others.

# Acknowledgments

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This book would not be possible without the complete willingness and openness of the eighteen people who participated as interviewees. They made this book what it is. Every aspect of value a reader may experience from the book is tied to their experiences, stories, opinions, and advice, and above all else, their willingness to share all of that with those they've never met.

Many of these advertising greats were supported and, yes, even gate kept, by agency professionals. I relied heavily on these professionals for their organizational skills and helpfulness.

I thank Bart Cummings, who provided an example of excellence for me to use as a benchmark and as inspiration.

I thank Gerry Graf, who wrote the Foreword, and John Sweeney and Mark Tungate, both of whom contributed their reviews and endorsements.

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I am also thankful for my family, especially David, Daddy, Susan, and Chloe.

# Introduction

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In 1984, Bart Cummings published *The Benevolent Dictators: Interviews with Advertising Greats* (Crain Books). In that book, Cummings interviewed eighteen of the most influential people in the advertising industry. We see these icons of advertising—people like Bill Bernbach, David Ogilvy, and Emerson Foote—as heroes and luminaries. Indeed, they light our way to the future of advertising. Cummings called his book, *The Benevolent Dictators*. Why? He explained that for many of these leaders, their word was law. And as for the benevolent aspect? There is no shortage of talent in the advertising business. No shortage of brilliance. But some are not *just* brilliant. They are also good, kind, fair, understanding, empowering, and dedicated. Despite the diversity of the interviewees, Cummings described them as self-confident leaders who didn't seek out the role of leader and, importantly, as people who truly believed in advertising.

The eighteen people represented in *Advertisers at Work* are unique in their beginnings, roles, and views of the industry and, like Cummings' advertising greats, they *believe* in advertising. At some critical juncture, what Doug Fidoten referred to during his interview as an inflection point, they chose to make a difference in the field of advertising.

Did they know they'd end up in advertising? Overwhelmingly, the response is *no*. Fate took a role. Many were influenced by someone who ultimately served in the role of mentor: Jayanta Jenkins, David Oakley, and Doug Fidoten in particular share rich stories of the influential people who played a role in changing their lives. They and many others in the book then chose to mentor up-and-comers. For example, many of the interviewees offer career guidance. Luke Sullivan's entire interview can be viewed as career advice to young creatives. Kristen Cavallo and Ellen Steinberg speak to what it is like to be women leaders in the field. Jayanta Jenkins encourages young African Americans to consider the wealth of opportunities available in the industry.

Everyone featured in this book stepped up to find the career they dreamed of, to be challenged, to identify a place they'd long to go each day and contribute. They find advertising the perfect playground—a congenial yet serious place to create, influence, have fun, and make a difference. Time and time again those interviewed emphasized their love of the field, passion for the



work, and enthusiasm for greeting each new project. Though each and every person represented in this book works incredibly long hours, they also can't imagine doing anything else. Kristen Cavallo shared her amazement at her good fortune, even though she initially took a pay cut to work in advertising. Others acknowledged the incredulous feeling that they could be paid and paid well to do work that was quite simply so much fun.

The advertising industry is a different beast than it was in the days leading up to *The Benevolent Dictators* and depicted by programs like *Mad Men* and even documentaries such as *Art & Copy*.

How is it different?

- 1) **Rigid organizational structures are dissolving.** *Mad Men* and *Art & Copy* expressed the days when the structure of agencies were fairly well represented by the departments of account management, creative, and media. At the core, perhaps these are still the primary tasks, but without doubt, the roles have expanded with the prevalence of digital media. The role of creative technologist is evidence of this shift. And importantly, particularly for creative work, these roles are not linear. For decades now, art directors and copywriters have worked together from ideation through to production. This shift highlights the change in the role of technology in advertising as well as the challenge in overcoming the silos. This is a theme that resonates throughout many interviews, including those of Kristen Cavallo, Susan Credle, and Edward Boches. Jim Russell gives us a deep view of the role of technology in agencies.
- 2) **Holding companies rule the industry.** Avid watchers of *Mad Men* know that the Sterling Cooper agency was bought by a holding company in the third season. Ownership limited the decisions the leadership could make. Ultimately, the limitations imposed by the holding company spurred the major players to launch out on their own. Once upon a time, agencies were truly run from the vision of their leadership. Today, four holding companies (the Interpublic Group of Companies, the Omnicom Group, the Publicis Groupe, and WPP) control much of the global industry. Holding companies set corporate strategy, direct

collaborative relationships among agencies within the corporation, and dictate operational and fiscal management of their agencies.

The advertisers featured in this book represent both agencies within holding company families and independents, as well as one holding company. Anne Bologna represented MDC Partners, a Toronto-based holding company that owns Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP+B). Mullen (Edward Boches and Kristen Cavallo) and The Martin Agency (Mike Hughes) are brands within the Interpublic Group of Companies. Leo Burnett (Susan Credle) is a part of the Publicis Groupe. TBWA/Chiat/Day (Jayanta Jenkins) is part of Omnicom Group. Dentsu America (Doug Fidoten) is a part of the Dentsu Group. Others work in agencies that have retained or reclaimed their independence, including Wieden+Kennedy (Craig Allen), Cramer-Krasselt (Marshal Ross), and McKinney (Ellen Steinberg and Jim Russell). Independent, small creative shops are also represented in the book (Chris Raih of Zambezi, David Oakley of BooneOakley, Ryan O'Hara Theisen and Jonathan Rosen of Lucky Branded Entertainment, and Eric Kallman of Barton F. Graf 9000). Marshall Ross provides insight into the challenges facing agencies that compete as part of a holding company.

- 3) **Advertising is much more than print ads and TV commercials.** Advertising as a communication medium isn't as straightforward as it once was. It can go beyond a standard print ad or broadcast commercial. Advertising today can encompass both *experiences* and *messages*. Even among messages, it may be short-form or long-form film, text only, even an activity. What's more, the messages (or experiences) may be shared anywhere, anytime. Ultimately, advertising is *ideas* regardless of the media involved. This theme is explored in the interviews of Mike Hughes, John Zhao, Ryan O'Hara Theisen and Jonathan Rosen, Eric Kallman, and Craig Allen.
- 4) **Awards are still important.** There are many awards sought after in the industry, such as Cannes

Lions, One Show Pencils, Clios, Addys, and Effies. The interviewees and their agencies hold many of these awards. Mike Hughes discusses the role awards can play in driving the work of creatives, and Susan Credle explains in her interview how her team uses Leo Burnett's HumanKind scale to evaluate and judge the quality and potential of their ideas. Though awards aren't the only measure of an idea's success, they are critical to recognizing the value and influence of ideas. They are important to agencies as recruitment tools for both top talent and new clients.

- 5) **Consumers have power.** We can't simply interrupt them and expect them to care about our message. We have to offer them something of value. To some extent this is relevant to point 3, but even without the experience or the message or the medium, we must recognize that consumers are co-creators of our brand. Chris Raih embraces this theme in his discussion of passion brands.

Those working in the field of branded entertainment—communication whose main purpose is to entertain the audience rather than differentiate a brand, but which is overtly branded—John Zhao, Ryan O'Hara Theisen, and Jonathan Rosen, emphasize the need to offer valuable content if brands wish to earn time with consumers. John Zhao explains the challenge he faces today as he strives to be relevant to audiences in a world so crowded by content from a variety of sources. Ryan O'Hara Theisen and Jonathan Rosen expand on John's view with their contention that advertising must serve the consumer—and by that they literally mean serve the consumer of the advertising—and not just the product's consumer. Their views add credence to the view that advertising can no longer simply push products via an advert. Instead, it must add value to the consumer, and that value is likely in the form of entertainment, and specifically branded entertainment.

Branded entertainment is actually not a new concept in the industry. When television programming was in

its early stages of development, brands like Proctor & Gamble sponsored programs of interest to its target audience. Today's soap operas are a byproduct of this kind of sponsorship. We are perhaps destined to return to this model as consumers seek high-quality, relevant programming, and brands seek to play a meaningful role in consumers' lives. Yet, the model will differ because audiences seek different forms of entertainment. For instance, entertainment may be sought online or offline and of varying lengths and genres. Branded entertainment as a niche of the advertising industry focuses on the provision of entertainment, sponsored, of course, by relevant brands. Ultimately, though, the success of branded entertainment, like award-winning advertising, is based on the story told.

Doug Fidoten shares the importance of storytelling, a theme that also arises in the interviews from Mike Hughes and Susan Credle. Many agencies developed in a time reverent to newspaper as the king of print and television as the king of broadcast. These days it's not uncommon to hear people anticipating the demise of traditional media and consequently the supporting advertising. Eric Kallman and Craig Allen take issue with such predictions, suggesting that there will always be a role for short-form films distributed via broadcast venues.

- 6) **The ad world is the world.** It's global. Audiences are exposed to messages from a variety of sources and origins. Brands pursue globally dispersed markets. Advertising is a cultural expression of meaning. When we seek to expand beyond our cultural boundaries, we must do so with an understanding of the culture we target. This is a challenge. Chris Raih, Craig Allen, and Jayanta Jenkins give vivid depictions of what it means to develop global advertising campaigns.

Everyone interviewed shares their personal stories, fears, challenges, successes, and insights for those of us who wish to learn from their experiences. Their openness and willingness to share made this project possible.