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TOP 100 ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

1. Volkswagen, "[Think Small](#)", Doyle Dane Bernbach, 1959
2. Coca-Cola, "[The pause that refreshes](#)", D'Arcy Co., 1929
3. Marlboro, [The Marlboro Man](#), Leo Burnett Co., 1955
4. Nike, "[Just do it](#)", Wieden & Kennedy, 1988
5. McDonald's, "[You deserve a break today](#)", Needham, Harper & Steers, 1971
6. DeBeers, "A diamond is forever", N.W. Ayer & Son, 1948
7. Absolut Vodka, The Absolut Bottle, TBWA, 1981
8. Miller Lite beer, "Tastes great, less filling", McCann-Erickson Worldwide, 1974
9. Clairol, Does she...or doesn't she?", Foote, Cone & Belding, 1957
10. Avis, "We try harder", Doyle Dane Bernbach, 1963
11. Federal Express, "Fast talker", Ally & Gargano, 1982
12. Apple Computer, "1984", Chiat/Day, 1984
13. Alka-Seltzer, Various ads, Jack Tinker & Partners; Doyle Dane Bernbach; Wells Rich, Greene, 1960s, 1970s
14. Pepsi-Cola, "Pepsi-Cola hits the spot", Newell-Emmett Co., 1940s
15. Maxwell House, "Good to the last drop", Ogilvy, Benson & Mather, 1959
16. Ivory Soap, "99 and 44/100% Pure", Proctor & Gamble Co., 1882
17. American Express, "Do you know me?", Ogilvy & Mather, 1975
18. U.S. Army, "Be all that you can be", N.W. Ayer & Son, 1981
19. Anacin, "Fast, fast, fast relief", Ted Bates & Co., 1952
20. Rolling Stone, "Perception. Reality.", Fallon McElligott Rice, 1985
21. Pepsi-Cola, "The Pepsi generation", Batton, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, 1964
22. Hathaway Shirts, "The man in the Hathaway shirt", Hewitt, Ogilvy, Benson & Mather, 1951
23. Burma-Shave, Roadside signs in verse, Allen Odell, 1925
24. Burger King, "Have it your way", BBDO, 1973
25. Campbell Soup, "Mmm mm good", BBDO, 1930s
26. U.S. Forest Service, Smokey the Bear/"Only you can prevent forest fires", Advertising Council/Foote, Cone & Belding
27. Budweiser, "This Bud's for you", D'Arcy Masius Benton & Bowles, 1970s



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28. Maidenform, "I dreamed I went shopping in my Maidenform bra", Norman, Craig & Kunnel, 1949
29. Victor Talking Machine Co., "His master's voice", Francis Barraud, 1901
30. Jordan Motor Car Co., "Somewhere west of Laramie", Edward S. (Ned) Jordan, 1923
31. Woodbury Soap, "The skin you love to touch", J. Walter Thompson Co., 1911
32. Benson & Hedges 100s, "The disadvantages", Wells, Rich, Greene, 1960s
33. National Biscuit Co., Uneeda Biscuits' Boy in Boots, N.W. Ayer & Son, 1899
34. Energizer, The Energizer Bunny, Chiat/Day, 1989
35. Morton Salt, "When it rains it pours", N.W. Ayer & Son, 1912
36. Chanel, "Share the fantasy", Doyle Dane Bernbach, 1979
37. Saturn, "A different kind of company, A different kind of car.", Hal Riney & Partners, 1989
38. Crest toothpaste, "Look, Ma! No cavities!", Benton & Bowles, 1958
39. M&Ms, "Melts in your mouth, not in your hands", Ted Bates & Co., 1954
40. Timex, "Takes a licking and keeps on ticking", W.B. Doner & Co & predecessor agencies, 1950s
41. Chevrolet, "See the USA in your Chevrolet", Campbell-Ewald, 1950s
42. Calvin Klein, "Know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing!"
43. Reagan for President, "It's morning again in America" Tuesday Team, 1984
44. Winston cigarettes, "Winston tastes good--like a cigarette should" 1954
45. U.S. School of Music, "They laughed when I sat down at the piano, but when I started to play!" Ruthrauff & Ryan, 1925
46. Camel cigarettes, "I'd walk a mile for a Camel", N. W. Ayer & Son, 1921
47. Wendy's, "Where's the beef?", Dancer-Fitzgerald-Sample, 1984
48. Listerine, "Always a bridesmaid, but never a bride", Lambert & Feasley, 1923
49. Cadillac, "The penalty of leadership", MacManus, John & Adams, 1915
50. Keep America Beautiful, "Crying Indian", Advertising Council/Marstellar Inc., 1971
51. Charmin, "Please don't squeeze the Charmin", Benton & Bowles, 1964
52. Wheaties, "Breakfast of champions", Blackett-Sample-Hummert, 1930s
53. Coca-Cola, "It's the real thing", McCann-Erickson, 1970
54. Greyhound, "It's such a comfort to take the bus and leave the driving to us", Grey Advertising, 1957
55. Kellogg's Rice Krispies, "Snap! Crackle! and Pop!", Leo Burnett Co., 1940s
56. Polaroid, "It's so simple", Doyle Dane Bernbach, 1977
57. Gillette, "Look sharp, feel sharp", BBDO, 1940s
58. Lewy's Rye Bread, "You don't have to be Jewish to love Lewy's Rye Bread", Doyle Dane Bernbach, 1949
59. Pepsodent, "You'll wonder where the yellow went", Foote, Cone & Belding, 1956
60. Lucky Strike cigarettes, "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet",

Lord & Thomas, 1920s

61. 7 UP, "The Uncola", J. Walter Thompson, 1970s
62. Wisk detergent, "Ring around the collar", BBDO, 1968
63. Sunsweet Prunes, "Today the pits, tomorrow the wrinkles", Freberg Ltd., 1970s
64. Life cereal, "Hey, Mikey", Doyle Dane Bernbach, 1972
65. Hertz, "Let Hertz put you in the driver's seat", Norman, Craig & Kummel, 1961
66. Foster Grant, "Who's that behind those Foster Grants?", Geer, Dubois, 1965
67. Perdue chicken, "It takes a tough man to make tender chicken" Scali, McCabe, Sloves, 1971
68. Hallmark, "When you care enough to send the very best", Foote, Cone & Belding, 1930s
69. Springmaid sheets, "A buck well spent", In-house, 1948
70. Queensboro Corp., Jackson Heights Apartment Homes, WEAFF, NYC, 1920s
71. Steinway & Sons, "The instrument of the immortals", N.W. Ayer & Sons, 1919
72. Levi's jeans, "501 Blues", Foote, Cone & Belding, 1984
73. Blackglama-Great Lakes Mink, "What becomes a legend most?", Jane Trahey Associates, 1960s
74. Blue Nun wine, Stiller & Meara campaign, Della Famina, Travisano & Partners, 1970s
75. Hamm's beer, "From the Land of Sky Blue Waters", Campbell-Mithun, 1950s
76. Quaker Puffed Wheat, "Shot from guns", Lord & Thomas, 1920s
77. ESPN Sports, "This is SportsCenter", Wieden & Kennedy, 1995
78. Molson Beer, Laughing Couple, Moving & Talking Picture Co., 1980s
79. California Milk Processor Board, "Got Milk?", 1993
80. AT&T, "Reach out and touch someone", N.W. Ayer, 1979
81. Brylcreem, "A little dab'll do ya", Kenyon & Eckhardt, 1950s
82. Carling Black Label beer, "Hey Mabel, Black Label!", Lang, Fisher & Stashower, 1940s
83. Isuzu, "Lying Joe Isuzu", Della Famina, Travisano & Partners, 1980s
84. BMW, "The ultimate driving machine", Ammirati & Puris, 1975
85. Texaco, "You can trust your car to the men who wear the star", Benton & Bowles, 1940s
86. Coca-Cola, "Always", Creative Artists Agency, 1993
87. Xerox, "It's a miracle", Needham, Harper & Steers, 1975
88. Bartles & Jaymes, "Frank and Ed", Hal Riney & Partners, 1985
89. Dannon Yogurt, Old People in Russia, Marsteller Inc., 1970s
90. Volvo, Average life of a car in Sweden, Scali, McCabe, Sloves, 1960s
91. Motel 6, "We'll leave a light on for you", Richards Group, 1988
92. Jell-O, Bill Cosby with kids, Young & Rubicam, 1975
93. IBM, Chaplin's Little Tramp character, Lord, Geller, Federico, Einstein, 1982
94. American Tourister, The Gorilla, Doyle, Dane Bernbach, late 1960s
95. Right Guard, "Medicine Cabinet", BBDO, 1960s
96. Maypo, "I want my Maypo", Fletcher, Calkins & Holden, 1960s
97. Bufferin, Pounding heartbeat, Young & Rubicam, 1960
98. Arrow Shirts, "My friend, Joe Holmes, is now a horse", Young & Rubicam, 1938
99. Young & Rubicam, "Impact", Young & Rubicam, 1930

100. Lyndon Johnson for President, "Daisy", Doyle Dane Bernbach, 1964

TOP 100 ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS OF THE CENTURY

By Bob Garfield

First of all, our thanks to Kurt Kroner, the man behind the defining example of the greatest advertising campaign of the century.

He wasn't the copywriter. That was Julian Koenig. Nor was he the art director. That was Helmut Krone. Nor was he elsewhere employed by Doyle Dane Bernbach, the agency that stormed the confining Bastille of advertising orthodoxy to ignite the "creative revolution."

Actually, our hero wasn't in advertising at all. Kurt Kroner was the one, among 3,389 Wolfsburg, Germany, assembly plant workers, to flag a blemished chrome strip on the glove compartment of a 1961 Volkswagen Beetle and reject the vehicle for delivery. Yes, if we are to believe Koenig's copy, Herr Kroner gave us the famously failed and fabulously forlorn. . . "Lemon."

God bless him, because in so doing he also gave advertising permission to surprise, to defy and to engage the consumer without bludgeoning him about the face and body. Kroner offered up a lemon with approximately the same result of Eve offering the apple. Not only did everything change, but suddenly things were a lot more interesting.

"In the beginning," adman pundit Jerry Della Femina has written, "there was Volkswagen. That was the day when the new advertising agency was really born."

In an industry that is by its very nature contentious, there is hardly a soul who would disagree. "Lemon." "Think Small." The TV spot called "Funeral." They weren't the earliest salvos of the revolution, but they were -- in their assiduously quiet way -- the loudest.

"Let us prove to the world," wrote William Bernbach in his 1949 manifesto for the "creative revolution," "that good taste, good art, good writing can be good selling."

Did he ever, and the Beetle is Exhibit A. The air-cooled engine and the 34 miles per gallon were all well and good, but the droll, conversational, self-deprecating style of the copy was as important a feature as anything engineered in Wolfsburg.

To be amused by Koenig's copy was to be flattered by it. The car that presented itself as the antidote to conspicuous consumption was itself the badge product for those who fancied themselves a cut above, or at least invulnerable to, the tacky blandishments of the hidden persuaders. "Think small" was thinking quite big, actually. The rounded fenders were, in effect, the biggest tail fins of all, for what Volkswagen sold with its seductive, disarming candor was nothing more lofty than conspicuously inconspicuous consumption. Beetle ownership allowed you to show off that you didn't need to show off.

So, no, contrary to all existing thought on the subject, Mr. Bernbach's creative revolution was not the overturning of '50s-era "motivational"

manipulation. It was simply the most agreeable and effective expression of it.

And the most influential. In ranking the 100 greatest ad campaigns of the century, the impact of that second genesis is manifest. Whereas only seven of Advertising Age's selection of the classic 100 campaigns of the century employ celebrities, and only eight of them invoke sex, and only four of them play on consumer fear and insecurities in the way the industry is constantly decry for doing, no fewer than 16 come from the 1960s. Six hail from DDB alone.

It is, of course, a challenging and somewhat presumptuous enterprise to reduce a century's labors to a Top 100 list. It is not difficult, however, to establish criteria. To be included, a campaign could qualify in one of three ways:

1) If it was a watershed, discernibly changing the culture of advertising or the popular culture as a whole.

The Volkswagen work clearly met this standard. So did the Avis campaign, which dared, heretically, to boast about No. 2-ness. One stunning example of that daring advertiser's contrarian thinking displayed the repugnant contents of a filthy ashtray. The copywriter had (supposedly) found it in a client rental and displayed it as the exception that proves the "We Try Harder" rule.

Of such boldness legends are made. Another was the Jordan Motor Car Co., famously -- albeit counterintuitively -- targeting women for motorcar purchases with its print ad titled "Somewhere West of Laramie."

Woodbury soap, which had been marketed for years for its medicinal properties, turned its attention on the user. Helen Lansdowne Resor's headline "A skin you love to touch," in implying a romantic advantage, may have been the first triumph for sex in advertising. Four decades later, Clairol turned its category upside down by doing more or less the same thing. "Does she. . . or doesn't she?" was a tantalizing question in the midst of the simultaneous Sexual Revolution, even if the ostensible answer was about hair coloring: "Only her hairdresser knows for sure."

And in yet a more aggressive double entendre, Calvin Klein scandalized viewers with the first foray into shockvertising: Brooke Shields, all of 15 years old, lying on her back in tight blue jeans, cooing "Nothing comes between me and my Calvins." Klein's much-imitated scheme of generating outrage to generate publicity to generate consumer buzz has altered the advertising landscape, mainly for the worse, probably forever.

2) If it itself was credited with creating a category, or if by its efforts a brand became entrenched in its category as No. 1.

Before the DeBeers mining syndicate informed us "A Diamond is Forever," associating itself with eternal romance, the diamond solitaire as the standard token of betrothal did not exist. Now, thanks to the simple audacity of the advertising proposition, the diamond engagement ring is de rigueur virtually worldwide, and the diamond by far the precious gemstone of choice.

By the same token, the overnight package industry barely existed before Federal Express vowed to deliver "Absolutely, Positively Overnight." Miller Lite's "Tastes Great, Less Filling" claim took a single beer brand and transformed it into an industrywide segment now on track to

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overtake the tastes-better, more-filling premiums.

Absolut Vodka achieved what Stolichnaya could never do: establish a burgeoning marketplace for premium vodkas. It was a neat trick for a product that is by law and by its very nature a flavorless commodity.



3) If it was simply unforgettable.

Consider, for instance, the granddaddy of all jingles:

Pepsi-Cola hits the spot.

12 full ounces, that's a lot!

Twice as much for a nickel, too.

Pepsi-Cola is the drink for you!

In 1949, that little number played 296,426 times on 469 radio stations -- not counting jukebox play, where it was also a favorite. The Pepsi jingle embedded itself not so much in the nation's psyche as in its very nerve endings, like the Pledge of Allegiance, or -- depending on your viewpoint -- a case of shingles.

Periodically a campaign comes along that not only captures the public's imagination, but penetrates the vernacular. Wendy's hamburgers' "Where's the Beef?" was on the lips of an entire nation, including at least one presidential candidate. A succession of Alka-Seltzer campaigns, from a succession of agencies, achieved the same -- effervescently and hilariously -- for two decades. Plop plop, fizz fizz, oh how memorable advertising sometimes is.

Smokey Bear has been in hibernation for years, but thanks to him everyone knows what, precisely, only you can prevent.

Everyone knows where M&Ms do and do not melt. Everyone knows what is 99 44/100ths pure. (Hint: It is not the advertising industry.) Everyone knows what is "Mmm mmm good."

Sadly, annoyance can be unforgettable, too. The shrill, petulant "Ring Around the Collar" still grates decades after its conception. Mr. Whipple is long retired but still fondling toilet paper in the darkest recesses of our memory. The Anacin hammers-in-the-head -- which were to Rosser Reeves' Unique Selling Proposition what the hammer and sickle were to international Communism -- still reverberate nearly 40 years later.

Such advertising is something like the Heimlich maneuver: a disagreeable experience but one which undeniably dislodges the obstruction.

By contemporary standards, "They laughed when I sat down at the piano" is a transparently disingenuous dramatization of a dubious promise, yet its triumph-of-the-nebbish approach informs direct-response advertising still today. Listerine's halitosis campaign ("Always a bridesmaid, never a bride") may have fed on people's insecurities, but it certainly framed the issue.

"For sheer fertility in creating situations in which halitosis could spell business ruin and wreck a romance," wrote E.M. Turner archly in his witty chronicle "The Shocking History of Advertising!" "Listerine must not be grudged a grain of admiration."

Resist if you can, as Mr. Turner could not, the temptation to sneer. Listerine, Wisk and their like-minded brethren dominated their categories at the time and for decades thereafter. Indeed, they still do.

This gets to the consequence of citing the greatest campaigns ever, especially with the ranking protocol employed here. We cannot always surrender to our aesthetic better judgment, nor even our moral one.

It will amuse some, and horrify others, that in the pantheon -- what we judge to be the 10 greatest advertising campaigns ever -- are included: two air polluters (VW and Avis), nutritionless sugar water (Coca-Cola), one reviled carcinogen (Marlboro), two companies infamous for the use of virtual slave labor (DeBeers, Nike), one purveyor of savory cardiovascular time bombs (McDonald's), two booze peddlers (Absolut and Miller Lite) and one cosmetic product preying on the vanity of women (Clairol).

Mercifully, the second tier of 10 -- Apple Computer, Ivory Soap, et al -- is markedly more benign. We leave it to history to divine a meaning from all of this. We are inclined to believe the best advertising is bound eventually to emerge from the biggest categories, and the biggest categories consist of the things people most desire. People do not most desire wheat germ.

Beyond the usual contemptuousness about the excesses of the consumer society, it's probably worth a second look at the list to see what conclusions we can draw from the advertisements themselves. What common thread runs through the 100 greatest campaigns of 100 years? What is the defining nature of this particular instrument of these particular immortals?

It is acknowledged, once again, that some of these ads are manipulative and some annoying and some less than completely honest. (The Marlboro man, for instance, the most successful ad symbol of all time, the supposed symbol of rugged independence, is really a symbol of enslavement to an addictive drug, isn't he?)

But these advertisements, most of them, are something else, too. They are treasures. For one, they are important artifacts in our culture. Woe betide future anthropologists and historians who try to trace the American experience without pondering what, exactly, it is that her hairdresser knows for sure.

And that's because the greatest advertising isn't great for moving merchandise any more than the greatest literature is great for compelling plots. Somehow -- in the service of carmakers and brassiere manufacturers and car rental agencies -- these campaigns have discovered our humanity. They have touched us, understood us, reflected our lives and often enough enriched them.

"They laughed when I sat down at the piano" may fall a bit short in the facts, but in exploring the roiling psychology of self-esteem, it overflows with human truth.

Not grand, momentous philosophical truth -- just, here and there, from this surprising corner and that, an observation, a revelation, a tender

8/15/2009

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nerve struck. Maybe it's just an ad for piano lessons or a computer or a facial soap, but it gets to the heart of what makes us tick. Leave it to the philosophers to contemplate the large issues.

Advertising is content to think small.

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