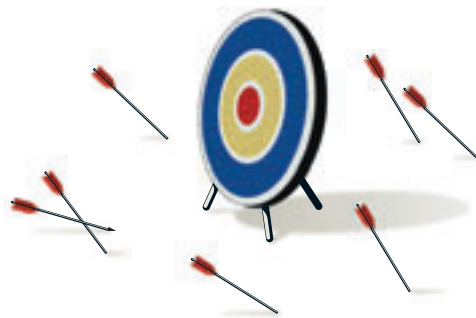


# WHY BAD ADS *Happen to* GOOD CAUSES

AND HOW TO ENSURE THEY  
WON'T HAPPEN TO YOURS.



*A guide for creating more effective public interest print advertising  
featuring new data from an unprecedented 10-year study by RoperASW.*

Written by  
**ANDY GOODMAN**

*Designed & Published by*  
**CAUSE COMMUNICATIONS**

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CAUSE COMMUNICATIONS is a 501c3 nonprofit created by Hershey Associates, a design and marketing consulting firm based in Santa Monica, California. Cause Communications was launched to work as a strategic marketing partner with nonprofit clients, enabling them to market their organizations and campaigns more effectively. For more information, visit [www.causecommunications.org](http://www.causecommunications.org).

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Andy Goodman

## INTRODUCTION

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### THE WAKE-UP CALL

The story behind this book begins on Halloween, and it is, appropriately, a little scary. On the morning of October 31, 2000, I spotted an article in *The New York Times* entitled, “What’s Wrong with Dot-Com Ads?” It described a newly released study by Roper Starch Worldwide (now RoperASW) that measured the ability of these ads to capture and hold the attention of magazine and newspaper readers. The reason for measuring these particular attributes, according to RoperASW, is quite simple: *people cannot be influenced by ads they don’t read.*

The readership scores for the dot-com ads were dismal. “A lot of advertisers on the Internet are just not paying attention to the basics,” the report’s author, Philip Sawyer, told the *Times*. This quote instantly struck a chord with me. As a communications consultant to nonprofits and foundations, I pay particularly close attention to public interest advertising. Much of what I see also appears to ignore the basics: headlines that ramble on forever, reams of dense text, layouts that give the eye no clue where to begin. I wondered if my observations were just the tip of the iceberg.

I called RoperASW’s headquarters in New York and asked if they had ever conducted a readership study of nonprofit advertising. The answer was no. To date, no public interest organization had ever commissioned such a study – *but the data to perform a study was there.* As RoperASW researchers had been interviewing magazine and newspaper readers over the years, they routinely captured comments on hundreds of public interest ads. Those responses were tabulated and deposited in the company’s database, but no organization had ever asked RoperASW to retrieve and analyze them.

With funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, I commissioned a study of approximately two hundred public interest print ads that had been published between 1990 and 2000. This sample included placements by The American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Red Cross, Planned Parenthood, Save the Children, World Wildlife Fund and dozens of other prominent national organizations. The ads appeared in large circulation publications including *Business Week*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Essence*, *Fortune*, *Reader’s Digest*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Sports Illustrated*. (A full list of advertisers and publications is included in the next section.)

The Starch study was completed in June 2001, and while “scary” may verge on hyperbole, the results are sobering at the very least. With few exceptions, the ads performed poorly in terms of capturing the readers’ attention, drawing them into the ad, and leaving a strong impression in their minds. Like the dot-com ads, most of the public interest ads were stunningly weak on design basics. “Relatively rare is the ad for a nonprofit organization that earns high readership scores,” the report concluded, “and quite common are those that rank among the lowest ads in a given issue of a publication we have studied.”

My hunch, apparently, was confirmed: major league nonprofits advertising in major league publications were getting distinctly minor league results. I use the qualifier “apparently” because a Starch readership study is *not* a definitive analysis of an ad’s efficacy, nor is it intended to be. Instead, Starch’s methodology (to be described in greater detail shortly) is designed to provide a strong indicator of performance. If a majority of readers tell Starch interviewers that they didn’t recall seeing a certain ad or only scanned portions of it, the ad earns low scores. These scores can then be viewed as an indicator of poor response among a wider audience, and common sense would suggest they’re reliable indicators. After all, if most people didn’t notice an ad or spend much time with it, it’s reasonable to assume – in the absence of other data – they didn’t act on it either.

Given the size and reputations of the nonprofits represented in the sample, however, I suspected additional data might, in fact, be available. Many nonprofits I advise use focus groups to test ads before they run, and it seemed likely that some (if not all) of the organizations with ads in the study would have done the same. If so, they would have qualitative data of their own to compare with Starch’s scores. In addition, several of the ads in the study included web addresses, toll-free numbers, coupons, or other mechanisms that offer direct measurements of reader response. If those responses had been tracked, more data could be added to the picture.

Consequently, I began to view the Starch study as a wake-up call rather than the last word in this story. Intrigued (and a bit depressed) by its conclusions, I started contacting the organizations included in the study to see exactly how much they knew about their ads’ performance. If they possessed data that contradicted the Starch scores, I wanted to see it and to understand how the ad had defied Starch’s predictions. If their data confirmed Starch’s findings, I wanted to learn how the organization got stuck with such a poorly performing ad. (Was it designed in-house? Did an agency create it, and if so, why did the agency deliver such an ineffective piece?)

In short, I could see that bad ads were happening to good causes, but I still wasn’t certain why.

### *Advertising is...*

*“It is essentially a form of education.”*

—FRANKLIN DELANO  
ROOSEVELT

*“The rattling of a stick in a swill bucket.”*

—GEORGE ORWELL

## INTRODUCTION - CONT'D

---

### A CLEARER PICTURE

In August 2001, I began interviewing representatives of nonprofits and advertising agencies with ads in the study. This new round of research took six months to complete, and even in that considerable time span my research director, Jan Fambro, and I could not track down data for every ad. When informed about the Starch study and plans for this book, most nonprofits wanted to be helpful, but some were simply unable to locate records for ads that had appeared as many as ten years ago. Turnover of key personnel was another problem: the data we sought may have existed, but the person who knew how to find it was long gone.

It's also worth noting that we encountered a surprising amount of apathy as we requested interviews. Even though Jan and I emphasized that we were offering an opportunity to develop a more complete picture of an ad's performance, numerous phone calls and e-mails to several targeted organizations were simply not returned.

Despite these hurdles, I managed to conduct very fruitful interviews with representatives of the American Cancer Society, Planned Parenthood, Red Cross, Save the Children, World Wildlife Fund, and several other national organizations with extensive experience in print advertising. I was also able to interview advertising agency representatives who were involved in the creation of tested ads, and who brought additional insights to the unique challenges of public interest advertising.

While conducting these interviews, I consulted several highly regarded books on both advertising in general and print advertising in particular to deepen my understanding of the field. (See *Good Books* for a full bibliography.) This list included industry classics such as *Ogilvy on Advertising*, *The Copywriter's Bible*, *Twenty Ads That Shook the World*, and my personal favorite (at least in terms of its title), *Hey, Whipple, Squeeze This*. It also included books that are tangentially related to advertising but have worthwhile chapters on such related topics as the power of photographs (*Visual Persuasion*), information design (*The Social Life of Information*), and the ever increasing challenge of capturing attention (*The Attention Economy*).

What emerged from the interviews, background reading, and a closer look at the Starch scores was a clearer picture of the state of public interest print advertising over the last decade. While I will be the first to admit that a couple of hundred ads, a few months of interviews, and a handful of books do not comprise the most scientific analysis possible, I remain confident in concluding that a wake-up call is timely. As you're about to see, additional research revealed that the news for some of the ads was not quite as bad as Starch predicted, but too many nonprofit organizations are still publishing ads with designs that simply do not enhance readership.



## THE GOOD NEWS (A.K.A. KEEP READING)

Which brings us to the purpose of this book and, thankfully, some good news for every public interest advertiser who reads it. If you want to create print ads that your target audience will be inclined to read, there are design principles to guide you. Eight decades of Starch research have identified these principles, and the readership study I commissioned applies them directly to public interest advertising. Moreover, if you talk to people in the field (at both nonprofits and ad agencies) and read the literature of advertising, you'll hear and see these principles referred to again and again.

Of course, you might also encounter resistance to any notion of "principles," "rules," or other hard-and-fast strictures that imply, "This is how you do it." That comes with the territory wherever creativity is a major part of the job. I've encountered that attitude throughout my careers in advertising, radio, and most recently television, where I wrote for the network sitcoms "Dinosaurs" (ABC) and "The Nanny" (CBS). In my tenure as a story editor and producer, I learned that all the creativity in the world wouldn't help you if you didn't understand the essential structure of the 22-minute sitcom. The best writers I worked with bent and broke the rules from time to time, but they did so knowingly. As T.S. Eliot once advised, "It is not wise to violate the rules until you know how to observe them."

The same can be said for advertising. Like a TV show, an ad's appeal is based on the shifting sands of public taste, so there is a certain amount of luck and magic in creating something that gets everyone buzzing. And the question "What makes an ad work?" has always been an elusive one, as evidenced by the oft repeated quote attributed to John Wanamaker, "Half my advertising dollars are wasted – I just can't figure out which half." Nevertheless, there are some things we *have* figured out. In his book, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, David Ogilvy writes,

*"I am sometimes attacked for imposing 'rules.' Nothing could be further from the truth. I hate rules. All I do is report how consumers react to different stimuli. I may say to an art director, 'Research suggests that if you set the copy in black type on a white background, more people will read it than if you set it in white type on a black background.' A hint, perhaps, but scarcely a rule."*

I'm not particularly fond of rules either, but I know that whether you're writing an episode of "The Simpsons," painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or designing an ad to save the whales, you need to understand the principles of your craft. The third section of this book identifies principles of print advertising that can help your organization design more readable ads on its own, as well as help you evaluate ads that are presented to you by an agency.

Why do bad ads happen to good causes? The evidence that I've been able to gather suggests one answer: the ads' creators violated so many basic design principles that poor reader response was almost inevitable. How can you ensure this won't happen to you?

Read on.

## THE STARCH READERSHIP STUDY OF PUBLIC INTEREST PRINT ADVERTISING, 1990-2000

### PURPOSE, HISTORY AND METHODOLOGY

A Starch readership study is designed to measure what has been seen and read in a specific issue of a publication. Starch studies have been conducted since 1923 under the guiding principle (originally articulated by Dr. Daniel Starch, the company's founder), "Before an ad can do anything, it must first be seen and read." Today, according to RoperASW, the Starch division measures over 25,000 ads in more than 400 different magazines and newspapers each year.

The research process for a readership study begins with a face-to-face interview. A Starch researcher will page through a selected publication such as *Fortune* or *TV Guide* and, as each ad appears, ask the interview subject several questions: Do you recall seeing this ad? Do you remember the name of the advertiser? How much of the ad did you read? A minimum of one hundred interviews is conducted for each ad, and interview locations are assigned across the U.S. to roughly parallel the publication's distribution. Interviews are conducted within 1-3 weeks of the issue's release so the ads will be relatively fresh in the reader's memory.

Once all the interviews for a given publication have been completed, the responses for each ad are tabulated and translated into three scores:

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>NOTED:</b>      | Percentage of readers who remembered having seen the ad in the selected issue.<br><i>(The Noted score measures the "stopping power" of the ad.)</i>  |
| <b>ASSOCIATED:</b> | Percentage of readers who recalled the name of the advertiser or campaign.<br><i>(The Associated score measures "branding.")</i>   |
| <b>READ MOST:</b>  | Percentage of readers who read half or more of the written material in the ad.<br><i>(The Read Most score measures reader involvement and tends to correlate positively with response to the "ask" within the ad.)</i> |

#### Attention, Not Just Awareness

"You can throw oodles of information into a person's awareness. The problem is that *everybody* is doing it. Awareness is vague, general information, and doesn't by itself catalyze any action. Attention is targeted and specific. It gets people moving. In a simple analogy, awareness is the target and attention is the bull's-eye."

—THOMAS DAVENPORT &  
JOHN BECK,  
THE ATTENTION  
ECONOMY

SCORES (%)	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Associated</i>	<i>Read Most</i>
RAW	56	52	28
ISSUE INDEX	103	110	115
ADNORM INDEX	118	124	126

This full-page ad was part of a multimedia campaign conducted by the American Cancer Society between March and August 2000. In the table of scores (above), you see the ad's three "raw" scores, the results of one hundred (or more) interviews: 56% Noted, 52% Associated, 28% Read Most. At this point, a question is probably forming in your mind: are these good scores? Without some context it's impossible to say, and that's why Starch calculates two additional sets of scores for each ad.

The *Issue Index* scores show how an ad performed compared to all other ads within the same edition of the magazine or newspaper. In this "apples-to-oranges" comparison, 100 becomes the average score, so results above 100 indicate a better-than-average performance. Issue Index scores for the American Cancer Society ad show that it performed 3% above average in attracting readers' attention, 10% above average establishing the organization's name in their minds, and 15% above average in compelling them to read most of the text.

The *Adnorm Index* scores show how an ad performed compared only to the other ads within its category. This "apples-to-apples" comparison is more precise because nonprofits (like many of their commercial counterparts) face an uphill battle when forced to compete for attention with automobile companies, fast food chains, and other deep-pocketed advertisers who can place expensive, full-page ads week in and week out. In this narrower competition against other "Organization Ads" in the same magazine, the American Cancer Society did substantially better: +18% Noted, +24% Associated, +26% Read Most. Based on this last set of numbers alone, Starch concluded that this ad effectively captured its audience and held them long enough to deliver its message.



THE STARCH READERSHIP STUDY OF  
PUBLIC INTEREST PRINT ADVERTISING,  
1990-2000 - CONT'D

SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST STUDY

All ads used in this study were culled from Starch’s print advertising data-  
base – the world’s largest – and we began our search by focusing on the years  
1990-2000. Within this time span, we narrowed the field by category, but  
since Leading National Advertisers (the body which determines advertising  
categories) did not create one as narrow as “public interest” or “nonprofit,” we  
were forced to search the broader category of “Organization Advertising.”

This search yielded 811 placements but included organizations and associa-  
tions such as America’s Pharmaceutical Companies, Knights of Columbus,  
and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Working with Philip Sawyer, the  
Starch Senior Vice President who would author the study, I refined the sam-  
ple to 195 ad placements made by advocacy organizations working across  
many issues – the “good causes” of this book’s title. (And please note: I am  
using this term in a strictly colloquial sense and am not implying a judgment  
on the relative “goodness” of any of these organizations.)

**HOW TO READ SCORES IN THIS BOOK:** as we evaluate the  
performance of each tested ad from this point on, we will focus exclu-  
sively on the Adnorm Index scores. The Noted, Associated, and Read  
Most scores for each ad will be automatically translated into pluses  
and minuses so its performance against other ads in its category is  
immediately apparent.



ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+ 47	+ 40	N.A.

These 195 placements were made by the following nonprofit organizations:

Alzheimer's Association	National Mental Health Association
American Cancer Society	National Multiple Sclerosis Society
American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science	Negative Population Growth
American Heart Association	Partnership for a Drug-Free America
American Indian College Fund	Pew Center on Global Climate Change
American Red Cross	Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Boys & Girls Clubs of America	Public Media Center
Cease Fire, Inc.	Quail Unlimited
Charitable Gift Fund Organization	Recycle America (Waste Management, Inc.)
Children International	Save the Children Federation
Choice USA Organization	Shelby Heart Fund
Christian Children's Fund	Sierra Club
CJ Foundation for SIDS	The Chancellor's Literacy Campaign
Coalition for America's Children	The National Arbor Day Foundation
Federation for American Immigration Reform	The Nat'l. Comm. for Missing & POWs Affairs
Foster Parents Plan	The Nature Conservancy
Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition	The Trust for Public Land
Hepatitis Foundation International	UJA Federation of New York
Jackie Robinson Foundation	Until There's a Cure Foundation
John Templeton Foundation	Wildlife Conservation Society
Leukemia Society of America	World Wildlife Fund
Making Strides Against Breast Cancer	
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence	

The placements were made in the following national publications:

Audubon	Fortune	Self
Better Homes and Gardens	Glamour	Seventeen
Bon Appetit	Good Housekeeping	Sports Afield
Business Week	Home Magazine	Sports Illustrated
Cosmopolitan	Ladies Home Journal	Sunset
Ebony	McCall's	Time
Entertainment Weekly	Motor Trend	TV Guide
Esquire	Newsweek	U.S. News & World Report
Essence	Parade	Vogue
Family Circle	Reader's Digest	Woman's Day
Forbes	Rolling Stone	

For the study, Philip Sawyer analyzed the data from all 195 ad placements, and his report highlights 26 ads that were most representative of the entire sample. Those ads, along with their readership scores, are featured in the next two sections of this book.

#### **A Note on Starch**

**Policy:** when conducting readership studies, Starch does not release the scores for all ads in a given study. If an organization with which you are affiliated is included in the list above, one of your ads may have been captured in this study, but the publishers of this report may not have access to your ad's specific scores. For more information, inquiries may be directed to Andy Goodman via email at [andy@agoodmanonline.com](mailto:andy@agoodmanonline.com).



## COMMON PROBLEMS

The following ads illustrate some of the design problems that were most common in the study:

AMERICAN LIVER  
FOUNDATION

"Hepatitis A"  
(May 1999)

This ad is fairly representative of many ads in the study. At first glance the design may appear professional and relatively "clean," but this is the kind of print advertising that most readers will flip past for several reasons:

- By placing the headline ("After I picked up hepatitis A...") over the photograph of the palm trees, the designers have made the headline more difficult to read while lessening the visual power of the photograph.
- The photo of the model is monochromatic (i.e., a single tone, as opposed to color or black & white) and parts of her head are cut off by the close-up angle. Starch data compiled from thousands of other ads show that readers find monochromatic pictures the least attractive to the eye, and they are also less attracted to pictures where parts of the model are not shown.
- Starch data also indicate that after looking at a photo, most readers tend to look down. This tendency suggests that most readers who stay with this ad will see the woman's face and then proceed to the subhead (orange text) and the body copy beneath it – entirely missing the quotation over the palm trees.

The low scores garnered by this ad are predictable based on all the design characteristics that run contrary to well-documented reader tendencies.



"After I picked up hepatitis A on vacation, I felt terrible. When I learned I could spread it to my family, I felt even worse."

**Hepatitis A is a serious and highly contagious liver disease that puts you and your family at risk when you travel overseas.**

-The hepatitis A virus is rampant in many areas of the world, including Mexico, Central and South America, parts of the Caribbean, Africa, Asia (outside of Japan), Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean Basin, and the Middle East. You can pick up the virus very easily from contaminated food, water, or an infected waiter or chef, even at the best hotels and resorts.

-Up to 22% of adults who contract hepatitis A are hospitalized, and some will even die. Hepatitis A, a serious and highly contagious liver disease, can cause fever, vomiting, stomach pain, diarrhea, and jaundice (yellowing of skin and eyes). But as bad as those symptoms can make you feel, you will feel worse if you pass hepatitis A along to your family and friends—before you even knew you have it. **But hepatitis A can be prevented.**

-**Get vaccinated.** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends hepatitis A immunization in advance of traveling to at-risk areas.

**Get vaccinated for hepatitis A before your next trip. See your doctor.**

[www.liverfoundation.org](http://www.liverfoundation.org) 1-888-4HEP-USA

American Liver Foundation  
© 1999 American Liver Foundation

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-34	-33	-22



*I've always cherished three uniquely American pursuits: Freedom, football, and hunting.*

*I think they all share some important qualities. Like discipline. Skill. Responsibility. Preparedness. Study. Patience.*

*These are the things I teach my kids, in part, through hunting. It's precious time together outdoors, and it creates a legacy our children will inherit that exceeds any bank account.*

*Yes, I love these three uniquely American pursuits. Maybe that's why I am a member of the U.S. Cavalry, the NFL Hall of Fame, and the NRA.*

**I'm The NRA.**

*Steve Largent*  
Steve Largent  
U.S. Congressman, NFL Hall of Famer

© 1998 National Rifle Association of America • 11270 Wayne Mill Road • Fairfax, VA 22030

Did You Know... "NRA's youth hunting and training programs reach more than 67,000 youngsters each year. And our Environment, Conservation & Hunting Education (ECHE) helps fund more than a hundred conservation programs including wetland restoration, access development for disabled hunters and wildlife-related youth activities."

Wayne LaBarte, 1998 Executive Vice President

## NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

"I'm the NRA"

(June 1998)

The recognizable face of a celebrity can add drawing power to an advertisement, and the NRA was probably counting on this when they cast Steve Largent – former quarterback of the Seattle Seahawks – in the starring role in an ad placed in a male-oriented magazine. Largent's handsome, smiling face dominates the ad, and it is highly likely that this is the first place you (and most readers) looked, but where did you look next?

The extremely low Read Most score indicates that most readers did not look at the text in the upper right hand corner of the ad, and again, this is predictable given certain design principles:

- First, while readers tend to scan pages from left to right, the tendency after seeing a photograph or other illustration is to look *down* (most likely, in this case, to the boy holding the rifle).
- Second, printing text over a photograph is usually a dicey proposition, especially in this example where the photo provides a mottled background that makes the light text difficult to read.
- Third, the final paragraph of the text (and the campaign's slogan, in fact) is printed over the rifle, which strongly competes for the reader's attention.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-15	-15	-64



## COMMON PROBLEMS - CONT'D


## SAVE THE CHILDREN

*"For some children..."*


(June 1998)

Among subjects for a photograph in an advertisement, babies are one of the most powerful "eye magnets" available. Starch data confirm this, but the company's research also shows *that the way the baby is depicted* is critically important. Readers instinctively want to know that the baby is safe, happy, and well cared-for, and they will look for visual clues along these lines. Unfortunately for Save the Children, the close-up of the baby's feet in this ad may have disturbed readers, particularly if it reminded them of children who were innocent victims of war, disease, hunger, or crime.

The low Read Most score for this ad (46% below average within its category) suggests that this ad turned away many potential readers, and Save the Children's records confirm this. Because of the direct response mechanisms contained within the ad, Save the Children was able to count the number of sponsors generated by the ad. According to Amanda Akel, Save the Children's Advertising Manager (who was not involved in the creation of this ad), the ad achieved only 8% of its goal. "We found in television advertising that showing children *and* the environment they live in is the most effective way to portray the picture," Akel added, "Showing the baby's feet is not telling much of a story, so I'm not surprised."




**For some children the first steps are the hardest.**  
\$9 A MONTH DURING THE MOST VULNERABLE YEARS IS A WHOLE NEW WAY TO HELP.



For children in developing countries, simply reaching their fifth birthday is a challenge. Save the Children's First Steps is a meaningful way for you to help children during their critical early years (between birth and age 5). You don't sponsor a child, you help support projects that provide vaccinations, nutrition and health education for needy young children around the world. It's only \$9 a month. Please, respond today and help make their first steps a little easier.

Yes, I'll take the first steps! I want to help children during their most vulnerable years. I understand that my commitment is limited to 48 months. Please charge \$9 to my credit card automatically: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ AmEx  
Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Instead of becoming a supporter at this time, I am enclosing a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Monthly (\$9) ☐ Quarterly (\$27)  
☐ 2 X a year (\$54) ☐ Annually (\$108)  
Please mail coupon to: 52 Wilson Rd.  
Westport, CT 06880  
or call 1-800-388-2925.

EF01  Save the Children.

Information concerning Save The Children Federation, Inc. including financial, licensing or charitable purpose may be obtained, without cost, by calling 800-243-5075. © 1998 Save the Children Federation, Inc.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-18	-24	-46



## The most educated investment you can make



with all your heart.

**UJA-FEDERATION**  
OF NEW YORK

### Should your investing and charitable giving work together?

**Yes, if you want a plan that can provide increased income for you and fund the causes closest to your heart.**

A UJA-Federation Life Income Plan will provide income for you and support for 450 agencies in human services, education or health care — in the greater New York area, Israel and 50 other countries. Under one of our plans, you will receive a lifetime annuity that pays anywhere from 7.5% to 12% of your gift, depending on your age. There are tax benefits as well.

**Yes, if you own highly appreciated, low-yielding assets such as growth stocks, personal property or real estate.**

A Charitable Remainder Trust can convert those assets into a steady stream of income without requiring you to sell them and pay capital gains tax.

**Yes, if your home has greatly appreciated in value.**

A Gift of Residence with Retained Life Estate allows you to donate your home to UJA-Federation, receive a current income tax deduction, and continue to live in your home for the rest of your life.

**Yes, if you have a large real estate portfolio or an interest in a family business.**

UJA-Federation has strategies that allow you to transfer such assets to the next generation at significantly lowered tax costs. Gift or estate taxes can otherwise amount to as much as 60%.

**Yes, if you want to pass IRAs to your heirs.**

Taxes can be as high as 85% of the value of an inherited IRA. But by using a portion of your retirement plan assets to establish a Charitable Remainder Trust, you may be able to preserve much of the value of the plan for your family.

**And Yes, if you want to make more of a contribution to your community than you thought possible.**

These plans can give you the economic security you need to become a major donor to your community — through UJA-Federation, one of the world's most prestigious and efficient charitable organizations. Whether educating a child in Lithuania, resettling immigrants in Israel, counseling people with AIDS in Queens, or caring for the needy in your community, UJA-Federation creates countless, unbridled acts of kindness every day.

For a free "Planned Giving Fact Kit" which explains how an educated investment can help you and the causes closest to your heart, mail the coupon, or call 800-99-PLANNED. That's 800-992-5466, ext. 75.

For a free "Planned Giving Fact Kit" or for more information, call 800-992-5466, ext. 75 today, or return this coupon by mail or fax to:

Dept. of Planned Giving & Endowments  
UJA-Federation of New York  
130 East 10th Street, Suite 728  
New York, NY 10003 Fax: 212 850-1174

Name

Title of officer or partner

Address  (apt. #)

City  State  Zip

Please send me more information. I'd like to see a life income plan comparison for the following age range:

☐ Under 35 ☐ 35-45 ☐ 45-55 ☐ 55-65 ☐ 65-75 ☐ 75-85 ☐ 85+

Please call me.

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE / JUNE 8, 1998 187

## UJA FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

*"The most educated investment..."*

(June 1998)

This full-page ad for the UJA-Federation is also swimming upstream against time-tested tendencies of newspaper and magazine readers:

- An ad's headline is often its best chance to grab a reader's attention. This headline is physically split in two by the photograph, and even in its entirety it lacks a strong call to action or an element of intrigue.
- A photograph is another tool for grabbing attention (many would say it's the best), but the meaning of this picture is ambiguous, and it probably failed to strike an emotional chord in most readers.
- People will read long copy (arbitrarily defined by Starch as 100 words or more), but they have to be intrigued by the headline, photo, or both — and the below average Read Most scores indicate that most people were not sufficiently interested.

ADNORM  
SCORES

Noted

Associated

Read Most

-11

-21

-15

## COMMON PROBLEMS - CONT'D

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR  
THE WEIZMANN INSTITUTE  
OF SCIENCE (ACWIS)*"The Idea Market"*

(May 1996)

"The Idea Market" was one of six ads designed to raise the profile (within the U.S.) of the Israel-based Weizmann Institute of Science, as well as to reinforce a positive image of the Institute among current supporters. The print-only campaign was also deployed to promote the value of scientific research in general. The ads were selectively placed in op-ed pages or other print environments where long text was likely to be read.

Unfortunately, this ad recorded low readership scores across the board, including the lowest Read Most score (69% below average) in the entire study. Placing the headline below the text is an unconventional approach, but the headline's size compensates for its placement, and, as with most headlines, it's probably the place where you begin reading the ad. The fact that the headline has no call to action, offers no benefit, and does nothing to intrigue you suggests that many readers stopped right there. If they did stay with the ad, however, they faced a cloud (literally) of text that is extremely difficult to read. Starch data show that unjustified left margins predictably generate lower readership scores, and that trend clearly continued here.


"The organization felt this was a clever concept," said Jeff Sussman, Vice President of Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs (who was not with ACWIS when the ads were created), "but in advertising, I think you need to do what the reader needs most, even if you have to pass on a great concept."

Science itself has become an economic resource. Beyond new "hardware", there is global demand for the "software" of innovative ideas and concepts. Even countries lacking in natural or industrial wealth can achieve economic strength through scientific knowledge.

✦ Israel offers a dramatic example. Its economy increasingly relies on scientific and technological creativity as an internationally marketable product. ✦ In pursuit of intellectual curiosity, researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science tackle many puzzles that at first may seem abstruse or impractical. But with surprising regularity, the unrestrained choices of basic science result in progress and prosperity. ✦ Theoretical mathematics at Weizmann led to coding systems undergirding TV transmission in many countries. In fields as diverse as medical electronics and desktop publishing, basic concepts emerged from Weizmann think tanks. New approaches to cancer ... new uses of solar energy ... new ways to shield the environment and raise food production ... all trace their origin to scientific imagination. ✦ Ideas like these enrich the world. ✦ Wherever researchers are engaged in adding to humanity's storehouse of scientific capital, they deserve support and encouragement from public and private sources.

The Weizmann Institute, founded in 1934, is a community of 2,400 scientists, engineers and scientists-in-training engaged in a full agenda of 850 research projects ranging from basic medical research in cancer, AIDS, neurosciences and children's diseases to chemistry, physics, agriculture, mathematics, computer science and the environment.

**THE IDEA MARKET**

 **AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE**  
51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010 212/779-2500

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-52	-53	-69

**Practical Office Paper Recycling Is Here**

**From Waste Management, the Industry Leader.**  
Office paper recycling is among the fastest growing forms of recycling. Here's how to get involved through Recycle America®, the nation's most successful recycling program.

**First, We Survey Your Company's Recycling Potential**  
To develop a plan, Recycle America representatives start with a survey of the volume and handling of your discarded paper. If your company is like most, up to 75% of your office waste is computer print-out, letterhead, copy paper, notes, and memos which could be recovered and recycled.

**Then We Develop A Program That Meets Your Needs**  
Flexible Recycle America programs make it easy for people to separate recyclable paper. Our system includes a wide variety of convenient containers that can even be imprinted with your company logo or slogan.

**We'll Help Educate Employees**  
Most employees will welcome the opportunity to recycle, but they'll also need some guidance to ensure a successful program. We'll help you develop orientation and promotional materials to get the program off to a smooth start.

**And Find Buyers for Your Paper**  
Waste Management's staff of recycling specialists works full time to insure markets for recyclable materials. And our extensive transportation network provides efficient, reliable handling.

**Get Involved**  
Office paper recycling is more than just an economic issue. Your employees will appreciate a chance to save trees and conserve the environment. And your community will appreciate conserving precious landfill space.

Contact your local Waste Management company for more information. They're listed in the Yellow Pages. Choose the difference leadership can make for you.

**Waste Management, Inc.**  
3001 Butterfield Road  
Oak Brook, IL 60521

WASTE MANAGEMENT, INC.  
"Recycle America"  
(November 1990)

Thanks to incorrect categorizing, this ad by Waste Management (a commercial entity) was filed under "Organization Advertising," but the insights gained from the scores of this ad are worth including. As you looked at this ad, it's very likely that you saw the headline ("Practical Office Paper Recycling Is Here"), glanced down to the woman, followed her extended arm to the piece of paper in her right hand, and then noticed the green and white Recycle America logo on the plastic receptacle. If you failed to return to the top of the page to read the text, you're like most of the people Starch interviewed about this ad. You saw it, you noticed the logo, and you stopped reading right there.

The Adnorm Scores for this ad tell the story of poorly conceived "flow." This design was successful in grabbing people's attention (27% above average) and leading them to the Recycle America logo (39% above average), but it failed to bring people into the text, which carried important information about starting a recycling program at your company (40% below average). Starch data show that when readers arrive at the bottom of a page, they have a strong tendency to turn the page, and that is probably what sabotaged a good start here.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+27	+39	-40



## COMMON PROBLEMS - CONT'D

AMERICAN HEART  
ASSOCIATION*"Heart Guide"*  
(April 1990)

This ad does a number of things right but undercuts its performance with one fundamental design error.

On the plus side, it begins by attracting the eye with a large, colorful, and interesting image: supermarket bags arranged into the shape of a heart. From here, the eye tracks down to a headline ("In one year, you'll make 8,000 decisions...") that provides an interesting fact and a clear benefit for the reader. And from there, the eye naturally moves to the text which, presumably, will spell out this benefit.

But this is where the ad's designer made a choice that runs contrary to well-documented reader tendencies. By dividing the text into three boxes, the designer has essentially built walls to stop the reader's eyes, and while sentences continue through these "walls," readers will frequently stop reading when they encounter a solid line. This design technique, known as "segmenting," discourages readership according to Starch data.

The Adnorm Scores reflect these pluses along with one, strong minus: the ad did a solid job of attracting attention and establishing the American Heart Association's name, but it performed well below average in pulling readers through the text. Segmenting is very likely the reason.



*In one year,  
you'll make 8,000 decisions  
about the food you eat.  
HeartGuide can help.*

Eating a healthful diet begins with making the right decisions. Now making those decisions is easier, with HeartGuide.™ It's the new nutrition education program developed by the American Heart Association. And its goal is to help you lower the total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium in your diet.

You'll find the HeartGuide program comprehensive and

easy to understand. With HeartGuide brochures, for instance, you'll get useful hints for choosing and preparing all kinds of healthful foods. And when



you see the HeartGuide seal on selected foods, you'll know those products have been independently tested to meet HeartGuide's requirements per serving for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. In

addition, when you have questions about the program, you can call our toll-free number: 1-800-223-2323.

So look for HeartGuide information at your local food store. It's the easy way to make thousands of healthy decisions.

**HeartGuide**  
THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION  
FARM-GROWN/RAISED, FRESH, FROZEN, TISSUE, TISSUE

Advertising for this program paid by participating companies, not by public contributions.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+21	+19	-23

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on his analysis of the data from 195 ad placements spanning 1990-2000 and a closer analysis of 26 ads, Philip Sawyer offered four conclusions in his report:

### 1. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, THE ADS PERFORMED POORLY.

Starch has conducted many studies that scrutinize the advertising of an entire sector, and as recently as October 2000 Sawyer had authored just such a study of Internet advertising (as noted in the Introduction). While the size of this particular sample (approximately 200 ads) is small by Starch standards, it was large enough for Sawyer to believe that he was looking at a representative batch of ads from nonprofits and foundations with the capacity to advertise in national publications. The performance of these ads, he concluded, was disappointing at best. “Relatively rare is the ad for a nonprofit organization that earns high readership scores,” he reported, “and quite common are those that rank among the lowest ads in a given issue of a publication we have studied.”

### 2. THE EXCEPTIONS PROVE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU CAN’T BLAME THE CATEGORY.

As you will see in the next section, there are a few ads which recorded high readership scores. This led Sawyer to an important conclusion about the category he was studying: “There is no reason to believe that nonprofit organizations are inherently handicapped because readers are not naturally predisposed to such ads. Enough nonprofit ads effectively capture attention to tell us that there is no bias against such ads.”

### 3. DESIGN ELEMENTS THAT WORK AGAINST READER TENDENCIES ARE THE PRIMARY CAUSE OF POOR PERFORMANCE.

For more than eight decades, Starch has been studying reader tendencies, and the company’s data has identified design principles which are proven to enhance readership. Conversely, the company has also identified a number of techniques that are proven to discourage readership, and Sawyer observed many of these unsuccessful practices in the public interest sample. “What can make ads work for a nonprofit organization,” he concluded, “is not a major overhaul in approach, but simply more attention being paid to the fundamentals of advertising – basic blocking and tackling.”

### 4. THE TARGETING OF A NARROW AUDIENCE IS NOT A LEGITIMATE EXCUSE.

A public interest organization may argue that its issue appeals to a narrow audience and that its advertising, consequently, will have limited appeal. Following this reasoning, one could conclude that low Starch readership scores would not be a fair measure of performance. “Our response,” according to Sawyer, “is that few, if any, ads are harmed if they are widely and wildly popular. If the nonprofit organization ad gets a positive response from someone who is unlikely to support the organization, the organization will not suffer from that interest. However, failing to reach someone who might be an enthusiastic contributor or member, but who is put off by a weak creative execution, would have to qualify as a missed opportunity.” Starch maintains that the most prudent approach is to employ design techniques that are most likely to attract as many readers as possible, increasing the odds of reaching the targeted audience.

## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES

*"I think print advertising changes superficially. We go through fashions: borders, typography, colored type or whatever. Techniques change, but I don't think the enduring principles of good communications will change that much. I don't see why they should change because it's about human behavior and reaction."*

—DAVID ABBOTT,  
GRACE & ROTHCHILD  
(AS QUOTED IN *Cutting Edge Advertising*)

With Abbott's philosophy in mind, I offer the following seven principles to guide you in the creation (or evaluation) of print ads promoting your cause. These principles are based primarily on Starch data, but additional research (interviewing current practitioners and culling from the literature of the field) has helped me refine them and add noteworthy exceptions.

Again, I offer the caution that these guidelines are not absolutes. As Phil Burton and Scott Purvis wrote in *Which Ad Pulled Best?* "...no single formula works successfully all the time in creating advertisements. Testing simply gives rise to general conclusions – it indicates what is most likely to work. If heeded...the principles stemming from generalities may result in techniques and approaches that will be more right than wrong."

So, here's to being "more right" the next time around:

### THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES

1. *Capture the reader's attention like a stop sign and direct it like a road map.*
2. *Make an emotional connection before attempting to convey information.*
3. *Write headlines that offer a reason to read more.*
4. *Use pictures to attract and convince.*
5. *If you want people to read your text, make it readable.*
6. *Test before, measure after.*
7. *When everyone zigs, it's time to zag.*

*Print Ad Principle*

**# I**

*CAPTURE THE READER'S*

*ATTENTION LIKE A*

*STOP SIGN AND DIRECT*

*IT LIKE A ROAD MAP.*



## PRINCIPLE #1

### CAPTURE THE READER'S ATTENTION LIKE A STOP SIGN AND DIRECT IT LIKE A ROAD MAP.

*Before you begin analyzing the individual elements of a given ad, take a moment to see the ad as a reader would when viewing it for the first time – in its totality. All of the elements should work together to grab the reader's eyes and lead them from point to point until an entire story is told.*

### KEEP IT SIMPLE.

"People are hurried," wrote Claude Hopkins in *Scientific Advertising*. "The average person worth cultivating has too much to read. They skip three-fourths of the reading matter which they pay to get." Hardly a surprising assessment...until you consider that Hopkins made it in 1923.

You don't have to imagine what he'd say today. In *The Copywriter's Bible*, Luke Sullivan of the ad agency Fallon Worldwide offers the current take on an old problem: "Go to the airport and observe somebody reading a magazine. By my watch, it's about two seconds per page. This is the milieu in which your next ad will be read. To succeed, an ad has to be as simple as a stop sign."

Years of readership studies – including their recent analysis of public interest advertising – have brought RoperASW to the same conclusion. "Do not force the American magazine reader to spend any extra effort to understand or read an advertisement," Philip Sawyer wrote in his report. "Unless there is a clear payoff for his efforts, he will just keep moving along to the next article or ad."

So when you start evaluating your next ad, consider it first in its totality and try to see it as the reader who is idly flipping pages. Ask yourself: does the ad say "Stop," commanding attention, or does it say "Detour," suggesting there's a problem that you're better off steering around?

### Resist Temptation!

*"Resist the temptation to dump everything you ever wanted anybody to know about your organization into one ad. Good advertising boils down the message to a single proposition, a single call to action."*

—PEGGY CONLON,  
THE ADVERTISING  
COUNCIL



## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

## PRINCIPLE #1 - CONT'D

## Look Here First

*"There must be a beginning to every ad. There has to be a point on every page where the art director and the writer want you to start. There has to be a place my eye goes first, the place it goes second, third, and so on."*

—ROY GRACE,  
GRACE & ROTHSCHILD  
(AS QUOTED IN *Which Ad Pulled Best?*)

## HAVE AN UNMISTAKABLE FOCAL POINT.

When readers look at your ad, they should have no doubt where to begin. Headlines are a traditional starting point, but if the illustration dominates the page, your readers are most likely to begin there. If the ad is mostly white space, a tiny line of copy at the center will grab the eye.

The point to remember here is not about relative size or the element you use to grab attention. It is simply this: your ad must have one element that is assigned the task of grabbing attention. This is the ad's *focal point*, the starting line, the opening speech in your case to the jury of readers. If you look at your ad and cannot instantly identify its focal point, your ad will probably be as successful as the lawyer who stumbles on his way to the jury box.

## PROVIDE A CLEAR PATH FOR THE EYE TO FOLLOW FROM ONE ELEMENT TO ANOTHER.

Your ad's work is not done once the readers have found the focal point. Now they must be guided through the ad to ensure that your entire case is made. Starch research has revealed definite trends in how readers' eyes flow across a page:

- Americans read across a page from left to right. Once readers have absorbed the images and information on the right side of a page, they are inclined to move off the page, as opposed to tracking left or upwards to the top.
- Most readers will look down after viewing an illustration, so if the illustration is intended as your focal point, placing the next most important element (typically the headline) below the illustration takes advantage of this tendency.
- Ads that have been neatly divided into smaller segments set off with borders generally do not earn very high Noted scores in readership studies. "The eye is a holistic organ," Sawyer writes, "it yearns to see clearly and without impediment."

An ad that smoothly takes the reader from one element to the next is said to have good "flow." The converse is, to use the industry jargon, "a mess." As you evaluate your next ad, make sure that it also functions as a road map, clearly guiding the reader to all the key elements.

A gun in the home triples the risk of  
a homicide in the home.

**CEASE FIRE**  
*Think about your family before you think about getting a handgun.*

Cease Fire, Inc. 845 15th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005-4424

**CEASE FIRE**

*"A gun in the home..."*  
(April 1996)

It's no surprise that this ad earned the highest scores in the study. The overall design is elegant in its simplicity, and the tagged handgun provides a clear and powerful focal point. From the trigger, the eye moves to the text on the tag, which tells the tragic story behind this particular weapon. Even though that text is slanted (making it more difficult to read), the drawing power of this photo was clearly strong enough to hold the readers' interest. Cease Fire's ad is an excellent example of simplicity, focal point, and flow.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+68	+52	+75

## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

## PRINCIPLE #1 - CONT'D

NATIONAL RIFLE  
ASSOCIATION

"I'm the NRA - Steve Largent"  
(June 1998)

I've always cherished three uniquely American pursuits:  
Freedom, football, and hunting.

I think they all share some important  
qualities. Like discipline. Skill. Responsibility.  
Preparedness. Study. Patience.

These are the things I teach my  
kids, in part, through hunting. It's precious  
time together outdoors, and it creates a  
legacy our children will inherit that exceeds  
any bank account.

Yes, I love these three uniquely American  
pursuits. Maybe that's why I am a member  
of the U.S. Congress, the NFL Hall of Fame,  
and the NRA. **I'm The NRA.**

*Steve Largent*  
Steve Largent  
U.S. Congressman, NFL Hall of Famer

© 1998 National Rifle Association of America • 12100 Waples Mill Road • Fairfax, VA 22040

Did You Know...? "NRA's youth hunting and training programs reach more than 87,000 youngsters each year. And our Environment, Conservation & Hunting Network (ECHN) helps fund more than a hundred conservation programs including wetland restoration, stream development for disabled hunters and wildlife-related youth activities."

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-15	-15	-64

These two ads demonstrate the difference that flow can make. As noted earlier, the NRA ad featuring Steve Largent recorded an exceptionally low Read Most score for two reasons: the design did not direct the reader to the text in the upper right-hand corner, and the text itself was difficult to see against the mottled photographic background.

Now compare the Largent ad to a similar one featuring baseball great Nolan Ryan. In this ad, the reader's eyes would probably go to Ryan first, tracking downward from there and away from the

What if one player took the field while eight sat on the bench? That's no way to win a game.

But that's how hunters are risking their gun rights and traditions. Three million NRA members can't shoulder the load for twenty million hunters. And they shouldn't have to.

We must each do our part to preserve lawful firearms ownership and teach hunter safety, even if we don't agree on every issue every day. That's why I'm a member of the NRA. **I'm The NRA.**

 *Nolan Ryan*  
Nolan Ryan  
Twenty-five years, 22 year career  
more league pitches with 5,000+  
strikeouts, 3 championships and 3  
retired jerseys.

  
© 1998 National Rifle Association of America • 11250 Wright Road • Fairfax, VA 22034 • 800-NRA-3033

Did You Know... "Nobody does more to prevent childhood firearm accidents than the NRA. We've donated 120 million to teach youngsters not to touch guns through our Eddie Eagle gun safety curriculum. Since 1988, 12 million school kids have learned the simple life-saving message about guns: Stop, Don't Touch, Leave The Area, Tell An Adult."

*Wayne LaPierre, NRA Executive Vice President*

NATIONAL RIFLE  
ASSOCIATION  
"I'm the NRA - Nolan Ryan"  
(November 1998)

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+9	+13	+64

text in the upper left-hand corner. Ryan's rifle, however, acts like an arrow pointing the reader back towards the text. Even though the text is printed on a photograph – which usually presents problems – it contrasts sharply with the solid dark background.

The 128% difference in Read Most scores between these two ads is dramatic and very likely attributable to these design variations. Simply put, one ad flows the reader to the text, and the other doesn't.



PRINCIPLE #1 - CONT'D

COALITION FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN

*"The Toughest Job in the World"*  
(March 1997)

Here's your basic meat-and-potatoes public interest ad: eye-catching photo on top, headline directly beneath, two neat columns of text, and the sponsoring organization's logo (with slogan and contact information) anchoring the bottom of the page. An ad like this probably won't win any design awards, but it should reliably flow the reader through all the elements and deliver respectable readership scores. For a basic design template, this ad by the Coalition for America's Children won't steer you wrong.



**"The toughest job in the world  
isn't being President.  
It's being a parent."**

Every day, I work hard to meet the challenges that come with being President of the United States.

It's a tough job. But there's a tougher job than being the President. It's being a parent.

With drugs, crime and other problems facing our children today, it's tougher than ever to be a good parent.

It's a job that none of us can do alone. That's why 350 wonderful organizations have come together to form the Coalition For America's Children -- to help good parents raise good kids.

The Coalition knows hundreds of ways that you can help. Whether you're a young adult who can serve as a role model for troubled teens or a retired person who can supervise an after-school program, the Coalition can get you involved.

To find out what you can do right in your own community, contact the Coalition. They'll help you find a role that fits your schedule and your interests. Whether it's a few afternoons a week or a few hours a month, any time you can give will make a difference.

Thank you.



**COALITION FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN**  
**WE'RE FIGHTING FOR THE CHILDREN**

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

**WWW.KIDSCAMPAIGNS.ORG • 1-888-544-KIDS**

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+3	+6	+11

*Print Ad Principle*

*#2*

*MAKE AN EMOTIONAL*

*CONNECTION BEFORE*

*ATTEMPTING TO*

*CONVEY INFORMATION.*



**PRINCIPLE #2****MAKE AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO CONVEY INFORMATION.**

*It's admirable to have the facts on your side, to be a purveyor of truth, and to occupy the moral high ground, but that's not enough to make your case. In an age of information glut, people give their attention only to those things they care about. And caring is a far cry from information processing.*

**MINDS TEND TO FOLLOW HEARTS, SO MAKE SURE YOU REACH THEIR HEARTS FIRST.**

Caring is an emotional and intellectual process, involving both the heart and the mind – and usually in that order. So, if you want your target audience to stop, read, and truly contemplate your message, you have to engage their hearts first. Several of the people I interviewed stressed the critical importance of designing ads that proceed from an emotional connection.

Jo Lynn Dorrance, Director of Marketing Communications for the World Wildlife Fund, supervised a print campaign to raise awareness for WWF's efforts to protect endangered species. "The way we're going to engage people is through inspiration," Dorrance said, "and *then* we're going to talk about things that are a little more difficult." WWF used striking photographs of pandas, polar bears, and (pictured at right) penguins in its "Amazing Grace" print campaign to strike that emotional chord first.



## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

*Hearts, Then Minds*

*"The emotions are mechanisms that set the brain's highest level goals."*

—STEPHEN PINKER,  
*HOW MINDS WORK*

## PRINCIPLE #2 - CONT'D

Jonathan Polansky, Vice President of Strategy for Public Media Center, stressed the importance of *leaving room* for an emotional response. "If the ad already looks like it's reached its own conclusion," Polansky warned, "it doesn't appear to care about what the reader thinks or feels." Polansky offered the parody headline, "Fascist Pigs Oppress Community!" as an extreme example of rhetoric squeezing the reader off the page. Given the same subject matter, Polansky suggested a headline that lets the reader decide what's fair: "Should my son be in a coma because he drank a beer on the street?"

An additional note of caution: public interest advertisers have displayed a strong inclination to target just two emotions: fear and shame. Despite a vast palette to choose from – joy and sorrow, love and hate, all the complex feelings that make us human – good causes have tended to paint with these same two colors over and over and over again. Unquestionably these are strong motivators, but if they are the only ones we use, we turn ourselves into the fear-and-shame people. And who wants to hear from them?

## FACTS FLY BY. STORIES STICK.

In *The Triumph of Narrative: Storytelling in the Age of Mass Culture*, Robert Fulford calls stories, "the juncture where facts and feelings meet." We hear and tell stories so often that we rarely stop to consider what an important role they play in communication and learning. In fact, experts from such diverse fields as anthropology, artificial intelligence, and journalism are coming to the same conclusion: our ability to remember and tell stories may be central to intelligence, self-image, and the quality of our relationships with others.



Starch research confirms the power of stories. “As time passes and as we see more ads featuring dramatic situations,” Sawyer reported, “we become more convinced that the fastest path to the reader’s heart and mind is to take a lesson from the narrative arts. Ads that powerfully present dramatic, emotionally charged situations - and ones that quickly and clearly convey a message to the audience – are those that people remember and bond with.”

Don’t assume, however, that you have to write a book to tell a story. The Cease Fire ad tells a compelling story with a photo and about thirty words. Just remember that people love to hear and tell stories. If you want them to talk about your ad, give them a story they can tell.

*“We have difficulty remembering...abstractions, but we can more easily remember a good story. Stories give life to past experience. Stories make the events in memory memorable to others and ourselves. This is one of the reasons why people like to tell stories.”*

—ROGER SCHANK,  
TELL ME A STORY: NARRATIVE AND INTELLIGENCE

PRINCIPLE #2 - CONT'D

AMERICAN RED CROSS

“Help Can’t Wait”  
(April 1995)

A three-word headline and an emotionally charged photo tell a powerful story that everyone can relate to. It doesn’t matter if an earthquake, hurricane, or bomb destroyed this woman’s home – she needs help and she needs it now. The ad makes the simple point that this is what Red Cross does best: providing help quickly where it is needed most.

The story told in this ad was a direct outcome of audience research. “We had just come off a couple of years of research [that said] people saw us as an organization that responded quickly,” said Scott Leslie, Red Cross’ advertising director. “We wanted to use that insight to suggest we really need *your* help and we can’t wait for it either.”

The ad, which was designed by J. Walter Thompson, scored very highly in terms of grabbing attention and branding Red Cross. (RoperASW does not calculate a Read Most score when an ad has fewer than fifty words of text.) Its strong emotional content and implicit story telling – along with simple design and good flow – are certain keys to its success.



Help Can't Wait



American Red Cross

This is when people need you. Not later. Not eventually. Right now. Please, support the American Red Cross. Your donations mean others will get things like food, clothing, and a place to rest...when it matters most.

1-800-HELP-NOW

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+47	+40	N.A.



## Kuwait is still waiting...

Kuwait is free again... free from aggression... from the pain and humiliation of occupation. But hundreds of Kuwaitis are still under siege... unjustly held in Iraqi prisons against all norms of international behavior. These people have been taken away from their homes and families, trapped by a man who has scant respect for fellow human beings.

Yes, hundreds of unfortunate Kuwaiti children are waiting for their fathers and brothers to come home... parents are waiting for their sons. Are you doing enough?

You too can help in our efforts to bring them back home to freedom... to a Free Kuwait.

Write or fax your letter of support TODAY to:

**THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MISSING & POWs AFFAIRS**

Block 6 (Jahyah Sabah Al-Salem, Kuwait - 44200)

Tel: (0965) 552 0611, 552 0070/80 Fax: (0965) 552 1732



## NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MISSING & POWs AFFAIRS

*"Kuwait is Still Waiting"*

(August 1992)

As noted in principle #1, this ad follows a reliable design template: large photo to capture attention; a headline playing off the photo positioned directly beneath; brief explanatory text; and the organization's name, logo, and contact information at the bottom. Attending to these design basics yielded predictably good Noted and Associated scores.

What probably accounts for the exceptionally high Read Most score is the ad's emotional impact. Kuwait is a nation about which readers may have mixed feelings, but when embodied in the person of a forlorn little girl in a jail-like setting, the message "Kuwait is still waiting..." has new meaning. Now the story is personal, and we are inclined to read on.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+16	+7	+73

**PRINCIPLE #2 - CONT'D****NATIONAL COALITION  
AGAINST DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE***"Flowers"**(April 1991)*

Here's another excellent example of an emotionally powerful story evoked with few words and a single image. This ad employs a different – but equally reliable – approach to flow by using the headline to capture attention and then directing readers to the photo for the emotional payoff. Once again, concise text below the photo fills out the story, and when you arrive at the bottom of the ad, your eyes' last "resting place" is the phone number you can call for help. (If you feel that the phone number could be bigger, I won't argue with you.)

Simple design is an asset in this ad, but emotion and storytelling are its great strengths.

# He beat her 150 times. She only got flowers once.



Every 15 seconds, a woman is beaten in this country.  
For as many as four million women, this battering is so severe, they require medical or police attention.  
But for nearly 4,000 women each year, the abuse ends. They die.

**National Coalition Against Domestic Violence**

If you need help or want to help, call 1-800-541-1957. Or write: NCADV, P.O. Box 18749, Denver, CO 80218-0749

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+15	+16	+47

*Print Ad Principle*

#3

WRITE HEADLINES

THAT OFFER A REASON

TO READ MORE.



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### PRINCIPLE #3

#### WRITE HEADLINES THAT OFFER A REASON TO READ MORE.

*In many ads, the headline will be the first element readers see. As such, it plays the pivotal role of capturing attention and driving it deeper into the ad. After you've considered the effect of the ad in its totality, pay close attention to the headline and make sure it's bringing readers "inside the tent."*

#### STATE A BENEFIT, AROUSE INTEREST, OR BREAK NEWS.

"They laughed when I sat down at the piano, but when I started to play..." is one of the most famous headlines in advertising history. Its creator, John Caples, went on to write *Tested Advertising Methods*, an industry classic now in its fifth edition. In this book, Caples contends that good headlines do at least one of three things:

- Appeal to the readers' self-interest by offering a clear, tangible benefit.
- Arouse curiosity that can be gratified by reading further.
- Break news that will also spur the reader to delve into the text.

David Ogilvy claims that five out of every six people who read your ad will read only the headline. Consequently, if your headline doesn't perform at least one of the functions Caples specifies, you could lose most potential readers at this point.

## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

### PRINCIPLE #3 - CONT'D

KEEP IT SHORT (BUT IF YOU NEED MORE WORDS TO BE GENUINELY INTRIGUING, DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE THEM.)

According to Philip Sawyer, "Starch data indicate that short, punchy headlines (i.e., 9 words or less) perform best in gaining initial reader attention and usually work most successfully in leading the eye to delve into the body copy." Jeff Boal of the PlowShare Group (creator of ads for World Wildlife Fund, National Crime Prevention Council, and the Environmental Protection Agency) likens print ads to billboards, which also require concise appeals.

That said, Caples points out that brevity is no guarantee of effectiveness: "Long headlines that say something are more effective than short headlines that say nothing."

Whether you take the long or short road, PMC's Polansky recommends putting headlines in the form of a question whenever appropriate. "If you ask a question," says Polansky, "the reader is going to come up with an answer of some kind. You've already started a dialogue, and good print ads are dialogues."

#### Great Wall, Better Headline

*"In headlines...say something specific and concrete. It will make your argument more persuasive and your ad more interesting. Here's an example of the power of detail. The headline read: 'It began 400 years before Christ. It is visible from Mars. You can touch it this spring.' Punctuated by a small picture of the Great Wall of China, the details in this headline made me keep reading about Royal Viking's cruises to China."*

—LUKE SULLIVAN,  
HEY, WHIPPLE,  
SQUEEZE THIS

### KNOW HOW YOUR HEADLINE PLAYS OFF YOUR ILLUSTRATION.

Most headlines work in tandem with a photograph or illustration, and their location on the page should be a function of this relationship. "If the visual is a payoff to a headline," says Fallon Worldwide's Tom Lichtenheld in *Cutting Edge Advertising*, "then theoretically you put the headline at the top and the visual below. If it's a visual concept, the headline is small and goes at the bottom."



In *Ogilvy on Advertising*, David Ogilvy goes so far as to present a specific formula:

- When the illustration carries the major responsibility of transferring information, Ogilvy recommends using a large photo (80% of a page), and a short headline of up to 9 words.
- When the text is more important than the illustration, Ogilvy recommends a shallow photo (25% of a page) with a headline of up to 20 words.

Just as an ad *must* have a focal point, you must resolve the relationship between the headline and the photo, determine which is the leading element, and proceed with your design accordingly.

*“What you don’t want to do is make the picture do what the words are doing, and the words do what the picture is doing. So you’ve got to decide which is leading, which is taking you forward, and if it’s the picture then almost certainly what you want is a very simple headline. Or it’s the other way around: a very simple picture and you’ve got an intriguing headline. But you can’t have both.”*

—LIONEL HUNT,  
LOWE HUNT & PARTNERS, (AS QUOTED IN *Cutting Edge Advertising*)



ADNORM SCORES	<i>Noted</i>	<i>Associated</i>	<i>Read Most</i>
	+46	+26	+47

# The most educated investment you can make



with all your heart.



## Should your investing and charitable giving work together?

**Yes, if you want a plan that can provide increased income for you and fund the causes closest to your heart.**

A UJA-Federation Life Income Plan will provide income for you and support for 150 agencies in human services, education or health care — in the greater New York area, Israel and 50 other countries. Under one of our plans, you will receive a lifetime annuity that pays anywhere from 7.5% to 12% of your gift, depending on your age. There are tax benefits as well.

**Yes, if you own highly appreciated, low-yielding assets such as growth stocks, personal property or real estate.**

A Charitable Remainder Trust can convert these assets into a steady stream of income without requiring you to sell them and pay capital gains tax.

**Yes, if your home has greatly appreciated in value.**

A Gift of Residence with Retained Life Estate allows you to donate your home to UJA-Federation, receive a current income tax deduction, and continue to live in your home for the rest of your life.

**Yes, if you have a large real estate portfolio or an interest in a family business.**

UJA-Federation has strategies that allow you to transfer such assets to the next generation at significantly lowered tax costs. Gift or estate taxes can otherwise amount to as much as 60%.

**Yes, if you want to pass IRAs to your heirs.**

Taxes can be as high as 80% of the value of an inherited IRA. But by using a portion of your retirement plan assets to establish a Charitable Remainder Trust, you may be able to preserve much of the value of the plan for your family.

**And Yes, if you want to make more of a contribution to your community than you thought possible.**

These plans can give you the economic security you need to become a major donor to your community — through UJA-Federation, one of the world's most prestigious and efficient charitable organizations. Whether educating a child in Lithuania, reserving immigrants in Israel, counseling people with AIDS in Queens, or caring for the needy in your community, UJA-Federation creates countless, unheralded acts of kindness every day.

For a free "Planned Giving Fact Kit" which explains how an educated investment can help you give the causes closest to your heart, mail the coupon or call 800-99-PLANNED. That's 800-997-7666, ext. 77.

For a free "Planned Giving Fact Kit" or for more information, call 800-997-7666, ext. 77, today, or enclose this coupon by mail or fax to:

Dept. of Planned Giving & Endowments  
UJA-Federation of New York  
100 East 90th Street, Suite 700  
New York, NY 10012 Fax: 212 876-0770

Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Title of agent or partner \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ (apt. #)  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me more information. I'd like to see a Life Income plan comparison for the following age ranges:  
 I under 35 \$10-40  
 I 35-44 \$10-75  
 I 45-54 \$15-85  
 I 55+

Please call me.

Please allow about \_\_\_\_\_

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE | JUNE 8, 1998 | 107

## UJA FEDERATION OF NEW YORK

"The most educated investment..."

(June 1998)

The headline of this ad has three fundamental problems:

- First, it does not offer a clear benefit, arouse interest, or break news.
- Second, it has been cut in half by the photograph, forcing readers to jump to the bottom of the page to find the final four words.
- Third, the illustration is the dominant image on the page, so the reader's eyes will probably go to the photo first. From there, they are likely to track right or down, but not upwards to the first half of the headline.

Given these deficiencies, the ad is off to a poor start, and its sub-par numbers across the board are a predictable result.

ADNORM  
SCORES

Noted

Associated

Read Most

-11

-21

-15

## PRINCIPLE #3 - CONT'D

## AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

*"When my breast cancer surgery was over..."*  
(October 2000)

We're off to a good start here: the woman featured in the ad is looking directly at us, and we're inclined to look back (more on the importance of eye contact later). Consequently, the ad does a good job of grabbing our attention, and the Noted score reflects this. The design is simple and the flow should ultimately deliver the reader to the American Cancer Society logo which stands out in the lower right-hand corner. The positive Associated score indicates a better-than-average performance here, too.

Problems arise, however, in the middle of the ad. The designer chose to work without a headline and offers only an enlarged line of text to pull the reader into the body copy. "As every PR person and newspaper writer knows," says Sawyer, "the first line is the most important. If that does not grab the reader, you have lost the reader." By coloring this line dark green, the designer has made it less readable against the woman's sweater.

The absence of a headline and the design choices for the text are the likely reasons this ad recorded a low Read Most score despite its good start.



ADNORM  
SCORES

Noted

+19

Associated

+2

Read Most

-28

*Print Ad Principle*

#4

*USE PICTURES*

*TO ATTRACT*

*AND CONVINCE.*



## PRINCIPLE #4

### USE PICTURES TO ATTRACT AND CONVINCE.

*If the headline isn't the most prominent design element, a photograph probably is, and that confers a similarly heavy responsibility. As the initial point of interest, the image must also be presented in ways that pull the reader deeper into the ad.*

### COLOR PULLS, BLACK & WHITE EXPLAINS, AND MONOCHROMATIC DOES NEITHER.

If cost is not an issue, use color: color photographs possess the greatest ability to attract the human eye. "Starch data indicate that readers are particularly drawn to blue and green hues," reports Sawyer, "and very often a strong reliance on those colors alone can boost Noted scores considerably."

Black and white photography is not as naturally attention getting, but it possesses its own unique strength. A black and white photograph is, by definition, an abstraction of its subject. By draining the image of color, the photographer asks you to look beyond the subject for other things – the story of a woman's suffering, for example, as depicted in the Red Cross ad, "Help Can't Wait."

Single-toned, or "monochromatic," photos serve neither purpose, according to previous readership studies. "Starch has consistently found that extremely rare is the monochromatic photograph that earns even average Noted scores," Sawyer reports.

### SEEING IS STILL BELIEVING.

Given the limited amount of space you have in a print ad and the limited amount of time you have with the reader, photographs are often a more powerful tool than words. In *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising*, Paul Messaris writes, "...photographs come with an inherent guarantee of authenticity that is absent from words no matter how authoritative." John Caples makes a similar point in *Tested Advertising Methods* when he asserts, "A photograph adds real information to an advertisement. Photographs convince. Photographs are proof."

Of course, in a time when doctored photos fly around the Internet and famous faces routinely end up in odd places, the credibility of photos may be more in question. Tom Lichtenheld addresses this point in *Cutting Edge Advertising*, but he's not overly concerned. "Even though people are savvy to retouching," says Lichtenheld, "they still believe that photographs don't lie."

### Photos and Story Appeal

*"The kind of photographs which work hardest are those which arouse the reader's curiosity. He glances at the photograph and says to himself, 'What goes on here?' Then he reads your copy to find out. Harold Rudolph called this magic element 'Story Appeal,' and demonstrated that the more of it you inject into your photographs, the more people look at your advertisements."*

—DAVID OGILVY,  
OGILVY ON  
ADVERTISING



## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

## PRINCIPLE #4 - CONT'D

*Are You Looking  
at Me?*

*"Starch studies clearly indicate that Noted scores are higher when models look directly at the reader than when their gaze is 'off center' or away from the reader."*

—PHILIP SAWYER,  
ROPERASW

**AVOID PLACING TEXT OVER PHOTOS  
(BUT CONSIDER PLACING CAPTIONS BELOW THEM.)**

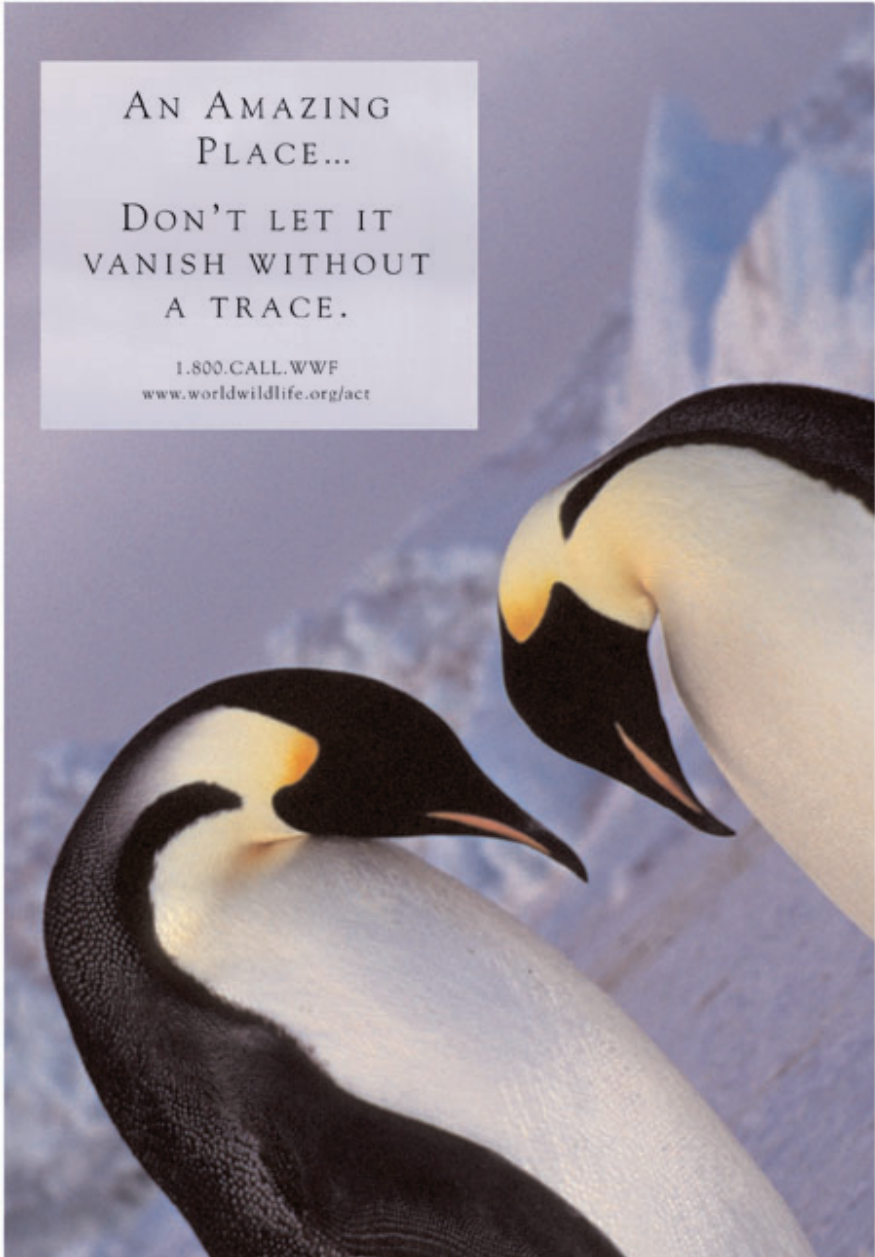
Given the strong attractive and storytelling power of photos, it is generally inadvisable to place text directly over an image. As we have already seen, such placements tend to obscure the photo, make the text more difficult to read, or both. In some instances, a photograph will provide a solid background that can offer strong contrast for text, but if you choose to mingle words and pictures, do so with care. According to Sawyer, "Words placed on photographs impair the eye's longing for visual beauty."

At the same time, be aware of opportunities to place text directly beneath a picture. "People are in the habit of reading the brief messages that are printed under pictures," writes Caples in *Tested Advertising Methods*. "This habit dates back to the reading of school textbooks, which have always had captions under the illustrations. The advertiser should take advantage of this habit." In *The Art of Cause Marketing*, Richard Earle offers another compelling argument: "Captions always get more readership than body copy."

**BABIES REMAIN ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL  
EYE-MAGNETS AVAILABLE.**

If babies are a credible part of your message, use them in your advertising – they are time-tested magnets for the eyes. "Starch data show that readers almost invariably respond well to babies in advertisements, and the results gleaned from [the public interest] analysis indicate that this finding holds for nonprofit organizations," Sawyer reports.

The recommendation to use babies comes with an important caveat, however. "While the presence of a baby adds interest for readers," Sawyer adds, "we must stress that the manner in which the baby is depicted is of primary importance to how an ad is perceived." As we have already observed in the Save the Children ad that showed only a child's feet, readers may be put off if they cannot see the whole child. "Our data strongly suggest that readers have a problem with partial shots of people in which isolated, 'chopped off' body parts are shown," reports Sawyer. "This finding seems to resonate all the more intensely as it applies to infants and young children."




AN AMAZING  
PLACE...

DON'T LET IT  
VANISH WITHOUT  
A TRACE.

1.800.CALL.WWF  
www.worldwildlife.org/act

Get your free World Wildlife Fund Action Kit and help leave our children a living planet.



## WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

"Amazing Grace"

(December 1999)

Using photographs of polar bears, pandas, and, in this case, penguins, World Wildlife Fund ran an extremely successful print campaign that generated \$4.5 million in donated ad space. The ads, which were designed by The PlowShare Group, appeared in *Bon Appetit*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Martha Stewart's Living*, and several other magazines, and it's easy to see why they earned so many free placements. The striking photograph, eye-catching colors, and elegantly simple design all combine for a reader-friendly effect – one that is apparently confirmed by the strong Noted and Associated scores. (As mentioned earlier, when an ad features fewer than fifty words of copy, Starch does not calculate a Read Most score.)

The principle of flow, however, suggests one small way in which this ad might be improved. From the headline to the penguins' beaks to the panda logo, the ad clearly directs the readers' eyes from the upper left to the lower right-hand corners of the ad. Ideally, the reader's visual journey should end at a response mechanism (e.g., a toll-free number or web address) where the interest aroused by the ad can be converted into action. In this design, however, two response mechanisms are positioned in the upper left-hand section of the ad and have probably been "left behind" by the time readers complete their trip. Relocating the telephone number and Internet address to a spot nearer the panda logo would probably help increase response.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+19	+10	N.A.


## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

## PRINCIPLE #4 - CONT'D


## SAVE THE CHILDREN

*"For some children..."*

(June 1998)



**For some children the first steps are the hardest.**  
\$9 A MONTH DURING THE MOST VULNERABLE YEARS IS A WHOLE NEW WAY TO HELP.



For children in developing countries, simply reaching their fifth birthday is a challenge. Save the Children's First Steps is a meaningful way for you to help children during their critical early years (between birth and age 5). You don't sponsor a child, you help support projects that provide vaccinations, nutrition and health education for needy young children around the world. It's only \$9 a month. Please, respond today and help make their first steps a little easier.

Yes, I'll take the first steps! I want to help children during their most vulnerable years. I understand that my commitment is limited to 48 months. Please charge \$9 to my credit card automatically: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover ☐ AmEx

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_


City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Instead of becoming a supporter at this time, I am enclosing a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Monthly (\$9) ☐ Quarterly (\$27)  
☐ 2 X a year (\$54) ☐ Annually (\$108)

Please mail coupon to: 52 Wilson Rd.  
Westport, CT 06880

or call 1-800-388-2925.


EP01  Save the Children.

Information concerning Save The Children Federation, Inc. including financial, licensing or charitable purpose may be obtained, without cost, by calling 800-243-5075. © 1998 Save the Children Federation, Inc.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-18	-24	-46

These two ads demonstrate how the drawing power of babies can be maximized or compromised. Both ads follow a traditional design template (stacking photo, headline, body text, response information, and logo), but the difference in treatment of the photo's subject is absolutely crucial here.

In the CJ Foundation for SIDS ad, we see a pleasant, full-color image of a baby girl lying on her back. The Save the Children ad, as noted earlier, depicts only the infant's feet. In her pink



By sleeping face up, she'll have a better chance of waking up.

Each year throughout the U.S., an estimated 3,500 infants die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, also known as SIDS. That's almost 10 babies every single day.

By placing your baby to sleep face up, you may reduce the risk of SIDS by as much as half.

For more information call 1.888.8CJ.SIDS. [www.cjfds.com](http://www.cjfds.com)

**CJ FOUNDATION  
FOR SIDS**

Face up to wake up.

CJ FOUNDATION  
FOR SIDS  
"Face Up"  
(January 1999)

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	+15	+1	+18

pajamas, the little girl appears comfortable and content (and she even seems to be waving at us.) The black and white feet leave the baby's status in question, and may even suggest a tragic end.

By adhering to basic rules for overall design, both ads should have performed reasonably well, but the scores are significantly different: by 33% in Noted, 25% in Associated, and an eye-opening 64% in Read Most. Seen side by side, they comprise an important reminder: *show the whole baby!*

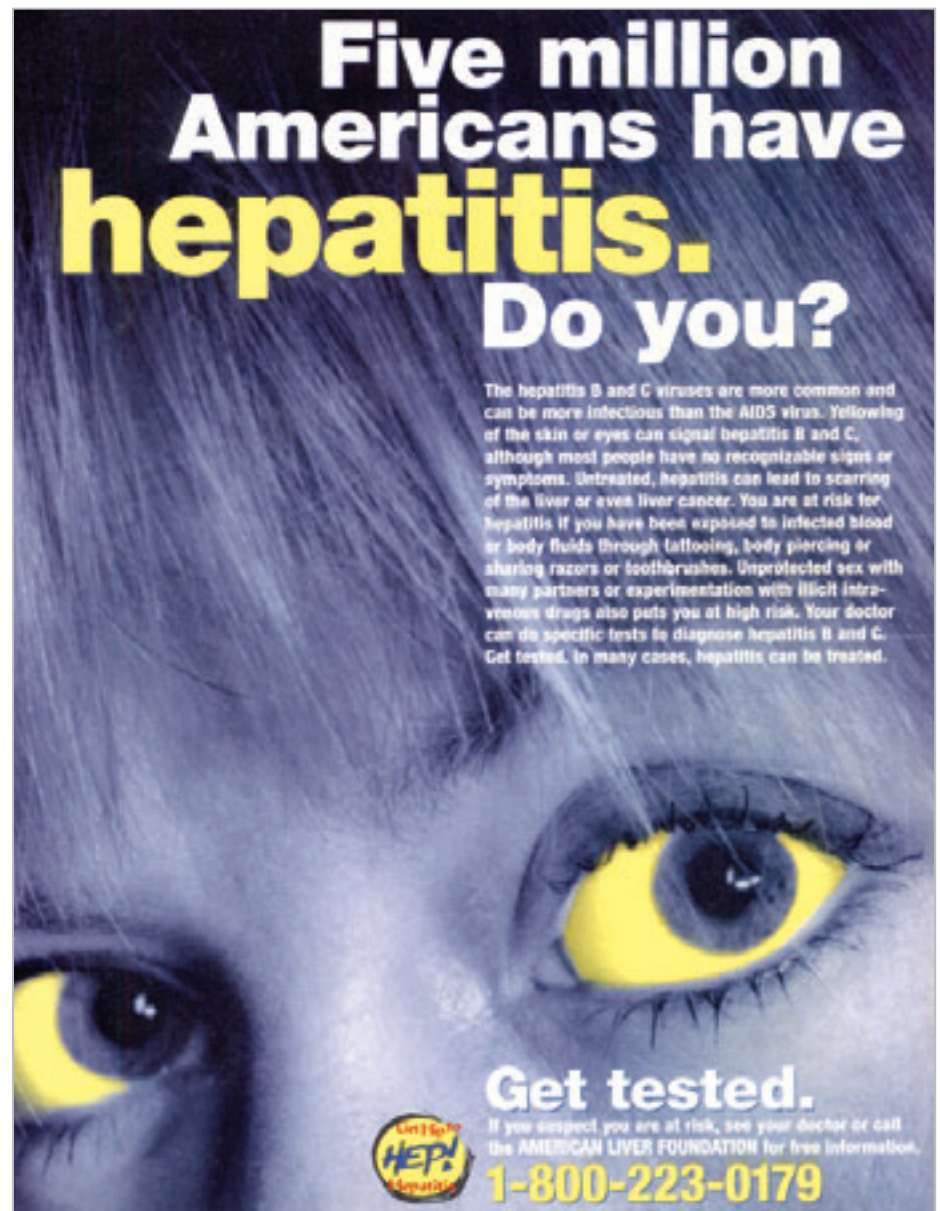


## PRINCIPLE #4 - CONT'D

AMERICAN LIVER  
FOUNDATION*"Five million..."**(December 1995)*

The photograph in this ad may very well be the design element that turned readers away. The headline is well-positioned to capture attention and lead readers to the body text, and from there the eye would track naturally downwards to the ad's "ask" ("Get tested.") and response mechanism (the toll-free number). The scores for this ad, however, suggest that most readers didn't remember it, and an overwhelming percentage of those who saw it didn't bother to read most of the text.

Sawyer points to the photograph as the likely reason: "The macro-lens effect achieved by this super close-up, partial view of a face is under such heavy magnification that it is almost nightmarish, or, at the very least, unpleasant for many to look at. Canary-yellow eyes staring off the page add to the disturbing look of the picture." While eye contact is generally desirable in photographs, this ad seems to be the definition of "too much of a good thing."



**Five million  
Americans have  
hepatitis.  
Do you?**

The hepatitis B and C viruses are more common and can be more infectious than the AIDS virus. Yellowing of the skin or eyes can signal hepatitis B and C, although most people have no recognizable signs or symptoms. Untreated, hepatitis can lead to scarring of the liver or even liver cancer. You are at risk for hepatitis if you have been exposed to infected blood or body fluids through tattooing, body piercing or sharing razors or toothbrushes. Unprotected sex with many partners or experimentation with illicit intravenous drugs also puts you at high risk. Your doctor can do specific tests to diagnose hepatitis B and C. Get tested. In many cases, hepatitis can be treated.

**Get tested.**  
If you suspect you are at risk, see your doctor or call the AMERICAN LIVER FOUNDATION for free information.  
**1-800-223-0179**

Let's Solve  
**HEP!**  
Hepatitis

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-19	-36	-50



*Print Ad Principle*

#5

*IF YOU WANT PEOPLE*

*TO READ YOUR TEXT,*

*MAKE IT READABLE.*



## PRINCIPLE #5

### IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO READ YOUR TEXT, MAKE IT READABLE.

While this may appear to be a *Blinding Flash of the Obvious*, it's one BFO that too many ad designers ignore. In their attempts to be creative and different, they continue to set type in fonts and sizes that may be pleasing on a purely aesthetic level but lack one important quality: you can't read the words.

### LEGIBILITY IS PRIORITY #1

People are conditioned to reading type precisely as you see it here. This text is printed in *sentence case*, so only the first word and proper nouns begin with capital letters. The typeface is *serif*, meaning that the letters have small additional lines and curlicues that help you recognize them. And this paragraph is *justified left*, which creates an even margin on the left side and a ragged margin on the right.

BY COMPARISON, NOTE HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO READ THIS PARAGRAPH. THE LETTERS ARE *ALL CAPITALIZED*, SO YOU DO NOT HAVE ADDITIONAL CUES TO TELL YOU WHERE ONE SENTENCE ENDS AND ANOTHER BEGINS. THE TYPEFACE IS *SANS SERIF* SO THE LETTERS HAVE FEWER DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THEM. AND THE PARAGRAPH IS *FULLY JUSTIFIED*, WHICH CREATES EVEN MARGINS ON BOTH SIDES BUT CAN LEAVE ODD SPACING BETWEEN THE WORDS.

"Typefaces are decoded as we read," says Jim Aitchison in his book, *Cutting Edge Advertising*. "The cut of each letter will transmit dozens of signals to the brain. Typography underscores words with emotional presence, creates atmosphere, colors the way we want our messages interpreted." Good typography does not draw attention to itself nor does it stand in the way of the message. As Sawyer concludes in his report, "The simplest, most easy-to-read renditions of body copy are those that tend to earn the highest readership scores."

### And He Probably Knows a Little About This

"Serifs exist for a purpose. They help the eye pick up the shape of a letter. Piquant in little amounts, sans serif in page-size sheets repels readership as wax paper repels water."

—JOHN UPDIKE

## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

### PRINCIPLE #5 - CONT'D

#### LAYOUT OF TEXT CAN ALSO ENHANCE READABILITY.

Even with careful attention to face and case, the text in an ad may scare off some readers if there appears to be too much of it. There are several layout techniques, however, that can make even long text (which Starch defines as 100 words or more) easier to read:

##### **Short Paragraphs**

"Break your copy into as many short paragraphs as you can," advises Luke Sullivan in *Hey, Whipple, Squeeze This*. "Short paragraphs are less daunting."

##### **Subheads**

"Subheads tell your story in brief form to glancers who don't have time to read your entire advertisement," writes Caples in *Tested Advertising Methods*. "[They also] get copy read that might otherwise not be read."

##### **Overall Appearance**

"Copy that looks good on the page has a knack of reading well, too," says Adrian Holmes, Chairman of Lowe Howard-Spink, in *The Copywriter's Bible*. Holmes encourages designers to break up long, heavy looking blocks of text and rearrange copy until the overall effect is pleasing to the eye.

The goal is to give the reader several points of entry into the text. "If you want people to enter the tent," says Polansky of Public Media Center, "don't have one heavily guarded entry point."

#### IN GENERAL, SHORTER IS SWEETER, BUT IF IT DOESN'T TELL THE WHOLE STORY...

The question of short text versus long text has passionate proponents on both sides. "Inside every fat ad there's a thinner and better one trying to get out," says Tony Cox, Creative Director for BMP/DDB, in *The Copywriter's Bible*. "In short, the less said the better."

David Ogilvy offers this rebuttal: "All of my experience says that for a great many products, long copy sells more than short," he writes in *Ogilvy on Advertising*. "But I must warn you that if you want your long copy to be read...your first paragraph should be a grabber." Sawyer echoes this thought in his report. "People will read long copy," he writes, "but they do so only when their conscience or curiosity is raised, primarily by the photograph or the headline."

Of course, the best answer to the question, "Long or short?" is probably, "It depends." In *The Art of Cause Marketing*, Richard Earle explains how an ad's placement can affect this decision: "If your environment is a glossy magazine, you may wish to let a startling visual carry your message. Certainly your copy should be brief and to the point. If, however, you are on the op-ed page of a serious newspaper, then a thoughtful long-copy approach may be completely appropriate."

### **May We Send You \$700?**

"I don't think people read body copy. I think we've entered a frenzied era of coffee-guzzling, fax-sending channel surfers who honk the microsecond the light turns green and have the attention span of a flashcube. If the first five words of the copy aren't, 'May we send you \$700?' word 6 isn't read."

—LUKE SULLIVAN,  
HEY, WHIPPLE,  
SQUEEZE THIS

## PRINCIPLE #5 - CONT'D

PUBLIC MEDIA CENTER &  
MEDIA ACCESS PROJECT

"Low Power Radio"

(May 2000)

The San Francisco-based Public Media Center has a penchant for the long-copy approach, and this joint effort (with the Media Access Project) is no exception. The body text alone runs over 200 words, so reading this ad requires real interest on the reader's part. Fortunately, the ad's creators employed several techniques to arouse interest and enhance readership:

- The headline – which is the clear focal point of the ad – is a compelling and urgent call to action.
- The body copy is large, left justified, and set in sentence case in a familiar serif text: all design choices that make it easier to read.
- Background information on the issue (low-power radio) and its supporters is set off in a box and bold print beneath the coupons.

"The ad did an excellent job of converting Noters to Readers," wrote Sawyer in his report, "and the healthy Read Most score – which is even more impressive when one considers the amount of text in this ad – is the ultimate signifier of success for this kind of ad."

## Low-Power Radio vs. High-Powered Lobbyists

# Act now to save America's last chance for local radio.

**T**he National Association of Broadcasters spends over \$5 million a year lobbying and hands out more than \$1,000 a day to federal candidates.

So when it decided to squelch an FCC plan that lets schools, churches, and civic groups serve neighborhoods with low-power FM stations, unsurprisingly, it won the vote in the House.

The *New York Times* called the vote "regrettable." The *Washington Post* said it was "a bad idea." The *Los Angeles Times* rushed to defend the FCC, which "works for the American people, not just powerful Washington lobbyists..."

The broadcast lobbyists want to keep broadcasting in the hands of a few corporations. Which means that all radio, once the most diverse and local of mediums, sounds the same everywhere. They also want to weaken the FCC and win final say on how America's airwaves, a priceless public resource, are allo-



### "Low-power for the public"

Low-power FM stations are 10- or 100-watts (compared to 100,000 watt commercial stations) with a range of a few miles. Only community non-profit groups (churches, schools, and others with an educational purpose in a specific geographic area) will be eligible for licenses. Low cost, low-power FM is the last chance for radio to return to its truly local, community-service roots. The FCC was to begin licensing in May until the NAB tried to overturn the plan in Congress.

### The NAB's Deceptive CD

In an attempt to pressure Congress, the National Association of Broadcasters fabricated a compact disk simulating interference it claimed low-power FM stations would cause. The FCC itself has denounced the NAB's simulation as "misleading disinformation." Independent analysis has found the NAB's technical case against low-power radio "invalid."



cated in the future. This gives big broadcasters even more power and profits than they had before.

But democracy doesn't mean that the richest, loudest voice wins. Not every time. Not this time.

Low-power radio can still be saved by the Senate. And it will be,

if your Senators learn that you've joined thousands of other Americans to support truly local, non-commercial radio on a human scale.

Mail the coupons below immediately. You can get your Senators' e-mail addresses at [icweb.loc.gov/global/legislative/email.html](http://icweb.loc.gov/global/legislative/email.html).

**President Clinton**  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20503

You've promised to oppose any bill that prevents the public from enjoying some small part of the spectrum to serve the public good. Senate Bill 2008 - no matter how it's amended - squelches and for truly local, non-commercial radio. Don't let it pass your desk. Please use your veto.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Senator**  
U.S. Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The House voted to weaken the FCC and kill Low-Power Radio. I urge you to defeat S. 2008 when it comes up in the Senate. Do we really want to concentrate all media power in the hands of a few corporations? Democracy will be stronger if these truly local, non-commercial stations go on air.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Representative**  
U.S. House of Representatives Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The broadcast lobby notified that low power radio has been through the House before the thousands of community religious, labor and educational supporters of non-commercial low power radio could respond. If there is another vote on the low power radio ban House-Senate conference bill S. 2008, please vote NO! We can't allow the NAB to kill noncommercial community radio and monopolize the nation's spectrum.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**Low-power FM radio is supported by:** American Library Association / Communications Workers of America (AFL-CIO) / Department for Communication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America / Federal Communications Commission Local State Government Advisory Committee / Leadership Conference on Civil Rights / League of United Latin American Citizens / Low Power Radio Coalition / Media Access Project / NAACP / National Bar Association / National Council of La Raza / National Council of the Churches of Christ, Communication Commission / National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts / National League of Cities / Rainbow-PUSH Coalition / U.S. Public Interest Research Group / United Church of Christ, Office of Communication, Inc. / United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries / United States Catholic Conference

Don't let them silence America's real voice—Yours! For more information, click on [www.lowpowerradio.org](http://www.lowpowerradio.org).

Jointly funded by Public Media Center and Media Access Project ([www.mediaaccess.org](http://www.mediaaccess.org))

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-11	-5	+7




*Science*  
itself has become an  
economic resource. Beyond  
new "hardware", there is global  
demand for the "software" of  
innovative ideas and concepts. Even countries  
lacking in natural or industrial wealth can achieve  
economic strength through scientific knowledge.

✱ Israel offers a dramatic example. Its economy increasingly relies on  
scientific and technological creativity as an internationally marketable  
product. ✱ In pursuit of intellectual curiosity, researchers at the  
Weizmann Institute of Science tackle many puzzles that at first may seem  
abstruse or impractical. But with surprising regularity, the unrestrained  
choices of basic science result in progress and prosperity. ✱ Theoretical  
mathematics at Weizmann led to coding systems undergirding TV  
transmission in many countries. In fields as diverse as medical electronics and  
desktop publishing, basic concepts emerged from Weizmann think tanks. New  
approaches to cancer ... new uses of solar energy ... new ways to shield the  
environment and raise food production ... all trace their origin to scientific  
imagination. ✱ Ideas like these enrich the world. ✱ Wherever researchers are  
engaged in adding to humanity's storehouse of scientific capital, they  
deserve support and encouragement from public and private sources.

The Weizmann Institute, founded in 1934, is a community of 2,400  
scientists, engineers and scientists-in-training engaged in a full agenda  
of 850 research projects ranging from basic medical research  
in cancer, AIDS, neurosciences and children's  
diseases to chemistry, physics, agriculture,  
mathematics, computer  
science and the  
environment.

THE IDEA MARKET

 **AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR THE WEIZMANN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE**  
51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010 212/779-2500

**AMERICAN COMMITTEE  
FOR THE WEIZMANN  
INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE  
(ACWIS)**

*"The Idea Market"*

(May 1996)

Like Public Media Center's ad, this ad presents over 200 words of body text, but several of the design choices made run contrary to reader tendencies:

- While the text is large and set in a familiar serif face, each line has been fully justified to fit the contours of a cloud. This creates uneven spacing between the words.
- Since the sculpting of the text into the shape of a cloud would not permit normal paragraph structure, heart-shaped bullets are used to denote the beginning of new paragraphs. This lack of white space makes the text that much more imposing.

In the last eight lines of text, the type shifts to italic and diminishes in size, and neither change makes it more readable.

As noted earlier, the headline does not offer a compelling reason to read the copy, but even if it did, the design choices made for the text alone should have been enough to dissuade most readers – and the low Read Most score is not surprising as a result.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-52	-53	-69

## PRINCIPLE #5 - CONT'D

HEPATITIS FOUNDATION  
INTERNATIONAL

"She just picked up a virus..."  
(April 1998)

Here's another ad which asks you to read over 200 words of body copy, but its designers did enough things right to earn a very High Read Most score. The text is sans serif and has been set in fully-justified columns, but:

- The ad has good flow. The head line grabs your attention, and the model's gaze points you over to the copy.
- The copy is long, but a color-coded map of the Earth and a factoid about Hepatitis A provide breathing room between segments, making the text less daunting to absorb.
- Within the text, certain sections are underlined or set in bold type to stand out. This not only draws attention to those lines, it differentiates them from the rest of the text, creating enough visual variation to keep the whole column of text interesting.

The Noted and Associated scores are slightly sub-par, but it would appear from the Starch research that those who stayed with the ad were drawn into the text.

**SHE JUST PICKED UP  
A VIRUS TO BRING  
HOME TO HER FAMILY  
AND FRIENDS.**

In certain parts of the world, hepatitis A virus is rampant. When you travel to these high-risk areas (shown in red on the map below\*), you can pick up the virus from contaminated food, water or an infected water or shell. It can be picked up very easily, even at the best hotels and resorts and it's virtually beyond your control.

**High risk** **Intermediate risk** **Low risk**

Hepatitis A can cause vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, fever, nausea and jaundice (yellow skin and eyes). But as bad as these symptoms can make you feel, they may make you feel even worse: You can pass hepatitis A along to your family and friends before you even know you have it.

Not only can hepatitis A make you very sick, it can also put you out of commission for a month or longer. Up to one fifth of adults who contract hepatitis A require hospitalization...and some will die.

**Hepatitis A, a highly contagious liver disease, can be easily picked up from contaminated food or water.**

Why test if Hepatitis A can be prevented? In fact, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends immunization for travelers to intermediate- and high-risk areas. **A vaccination in advance of your trip is the best way to protect yourself against the hepatitis A virus.**

If you're planning your vacation, talk to the doctor to ask your doctor or health-care provider about getting immunized against hepatitis A.

**SEE YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT HEPATITIS A.**

**HEPATITIS FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL**

**Protect yourself. Protect your family.**

\*The map provides available data, and patterns may vary within countries.

ADNORM SCORES	Noted	Associated	Read Most
	-6	-2	+40

*Print Ad Principle*

#6

TEST BEFORE,

MEASURE AFTER.



## PRINCIPLE #6

### TEST BEFORE, MEASURE AFTER.

*Even if you follow principles 1-5 to the letter, you may still produce an ad with a message that doesn't connect with your target audience. Sometimes the headline turns out to be more confusing than clever, or the picture which you built the ad around is simply not as provocative as you thought. That's why it's prudent to check in with your target audience before investing thousands (if not millions) in your next print campaign.*

### TEST AN AD'S EFFECTIVENESS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

The American Heart Association, American Red Cross, Planned Parenthood, and Save the Children are a few of the many groups I spoke with who used focus groups to shape their print advertising. "We tend to test most everything we do," said Scott Leslie of the Red Cross, "and at least we know that people get the message when we show ads in focus groups. If people don't repeat back to us unaided what we intend, then we haven't done our job."

Other groups, like the American Heart Association, were more interested in testing concepts. "We don't test the ads themselves," said Julie Grabarkewitz. "We test the messaging. We ask, 'If we say this, would that motivate you?'" At approximately \$5,000 a session, focus groups may be viewed as an expensive luxury, but most of the nonprofits interviewed agreed that they were an investment in better messaging.

Of course, there are dissenting opinions on the subject. Luke Sullivan believes that, like committees, focus groups are "a cul-de-sac down which ideas are lured and quietly strangled." If you want to talk to your target audience, he recommends that you avoid the windowless, dimly lit rooms of a research center and proceed directly to the places where they shop, play, and hang out.

Crispin Porter + Bogusky, the Miami-based agency that developed the anti-smoking "Truth" campaign, did precisely this. To get a better sense of teenager attitudes towards smoking, CP+B's research team armed a handful of teens with video cameras and sent them to malls and movie theaters to interview other kids. The informally captured comments, according to CP+B's president, Jeff Hicks, were far more candid and revealing than anything the agency could have hoped to hear in a focus group.

Whether arguing for traditional focus groups or more informal "street" research, all of the public interest advertisers made the same point: find a way to test your message with your target audience before publishing your ad. This may entail some extra expense, but in the long run, an untested ad that performs poorly will cost you more.

### But I Don't Have a Research Budget

*"You can test with people you know – relatives, friends, members of community groups. Ask them, 'What does this ad say to you?' If you're not getting the answer back that you intended, you need to go back to the drawing board."*

—PEGGY CONLON,  
THE ADVERTISING  
COUNCIL

## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

### PRINCIPLE #6 - CONT'D

#### *Because Who Doesn't Like to Be Thanked?*

*"It is appropriate to recognize somewhere on the ad that the space has been donated by the publication. Including 'a public service of this publication' can go a long way in securing donated space."*

—JEFF BOAL,  
THE PLOWSHARE  
GROUP

#### PRE-TESTING ADS WITH A PUBLICATION'S GATEKEEPERS CAN INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF SECURING SPACE.

"We always take into account what we hear from art directors in magazines because if they don't like it, it won't find its way to the consumer," said Jo Lynn Dorrance of World Wildlife Fund. Working with her agency, The PlowShare Group, Jo Lynn conducted one-on-one interviews with art directors to make sure WWF's ads would appeal to them.

"They were flattered to be asked," said Dorrance, "and it really paid off – the response now as opposed to years ago is like night and day." As noted in principle #4, WWF's "Amazing Grace" campaign depended entirely on donated ad space, but thanks to thoughtful pre-testing with art directors, the campaign received \$4.5 million in donations of space.

#### MEASURE RESPONSE AFTER PUBLICATION.

Starch Readership Studies are one way to test response after publication, but their cost (as much as \$1,200 to track the performance of a single ad) may put them out of reach for many nonprofits. Many publishers, however, will assume the cost of a study if an advertiser requests one, so it may be worth an inquiry. Another cost-effective route is to build a mechanism into your ad which will allow you to accurately track reader response to that particular placement. Sample mechanisms can include:

- A toll-free number with a dedicated extension (to distinguish calls generated by the ad from those generated by other postings of your phone number);
- A website address that includes a dedicated page (again to distinguish visits generated by the ad from hits that may come from other postings of your address);
- A coupon that includes a code identifying the publication in which the ad was placed;

Not every ad asks for an action which can be accurately measured, but it is incumbent upon you to take advantage of those opportunities that do. "Regardless of what method of testing you use," writes Caples in *Tested Advertising Methods*, "the important thing is to have some method of testing. Testing enables you to throw opinions overboard and get down to facts."

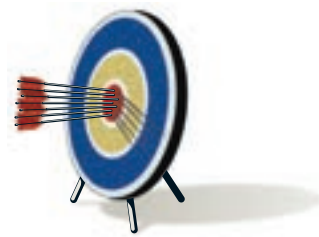


*Print Ad Principle*

#7

*WHEN EVERYONE ZIGS,*

*IT'S TIME TO ZAG.*



**PRINCIPLE #7****WHEN EVERYONE ZIGS, IT'S TIME TO ZAG.**

*Principles, like rules, are made to be broken. Just make sure, however, that when you break the rules, you do so knowingly and with good reason.*

Imagine flipping through a magazine where every ad (including the public interest variety) has followed the fundamental principles of good design. On page after page, you find a strong photo that leads to a crisp headline that leads to concise, readable body copy, that leads to the ad's "ask" and the sponsoring organization's name and contact information.

One ad, however, has seemingly broken all the rules. It features no headline and a tiny picture that you have to study to figure out what's happening. White body text is printed against a black background (a design choice which consistently draws fewer readers than black text on a white background), and the whole ad seems to be slightly off-kilter. Naturally, when you close the magazine, this is the one ad you remember.

Sometimes your ad will stand out most by breaking the rules. The cautionary note here is that you should do so purposefully. The design principles articulated above did not emerge by accident. They represent more than eight decades of reader interviews as well as the consensus of some of the best minds in advertising today.

Nevertheless, each ad should be approached on a case-by-case basis. The kind of audience to whom you are appealing, the nature of the publication in which the ad will appear, the subject matter of the ad – these and many other factors may necessitate a bending or breaking of one or more principles. And breaking these rules is not unlike civil disobedience: it may be against the "law," but you're serving a higher purpose.

***The Rule-Breaker's  
Rationale***

*"An idea that does not  
involve risk does not  
deserve to be an idea."*

—OSCAR WILDE

## THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES - CONT'D

### THE PRINT AD PRINCIPLES SUMMARY

#### 1. CAPTURE THE READER'S ATTENTION LIKE A STOP SIGN AND DIRECT IT LIKE A ROAD MAP.

- Keep it simple.
- Have an unmistakable focal point.
- Provide a clear "path" for the eye to follow from one element to another.

#### 2. MAKE AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO CONVEY INFORMATION.

- Minds tend to follow hearts, so make sure you reach their hearts first.
- Facts fly by. Stories stick.

#### 3. WRITE HEADLINES THAT OFFER A REASON TO READ MORE.

- State a benefit, arouse interest, or break news.
- Keep it short (but if you need more words to be genuinely intriguing, don't be afraid to use them).
- Know how your headline plays off your illustration.

#### 4. USE PICTURES TO ATTRACT AND CONVINCE.

- Color pulls, black & white explains, and monochromatic does neither.
- Seeing is still believing.
- Avoid placing text over photos (but consider placing captions below them).
- Babies remain one of the most powerful eye-magnets available.

#### 5. IF YOU WANT PEOPLE TO READ YOUR TEXT, MAKE IT READABLE.

- Legibility is priority #1.
- Layout of text can also enhance readability.
- In general, shorter is sweeter, but if it doesn't tell the whole story...

#### 6. TEST BEFORE, MEASURE AFTER.

- Test an ad's effectiveness before publication.
- Pre-testing ads with a publication's gatekeepers can increase your chances of securing donated space.
- Measure response after publication.

#### 7. WHEN EVERYONE ZIGS, IT'S TIME TO ZAG.

## GOOD CAUSES, GREAT ADS

### USE IT OR LOSE IT

Thank you for reading this book: you've just taken step number one.

According to David Garvin, author of *Learning in Action*, you have completed the first step in the learning process: you have **acquired** new information. If you're truly interested in remembering what you have read and making it a standard part of your creative process, however, you have two more steps ahead of you.

General principles may be interesting, but to become genuinely useful they must be **interpreted** to meet your needs. If you wear several hats in your organization (e.g., executive director + communications director + development director) the rules will be different for you than for the single-hatted advertising manager of a large national nonprofit. So take another look at the seven principles and ask yourself, "How can I make these work for me?" In this process of interpretation, you start to make the principles *yours*.

Finally, and most importantly, the information must be **applied**. This is where conceptual rubber meets the nonprofit road. The next time you work on a print ad – whether you're creating it from scratch or evaluating another person's work – look at it through the filter of the seven principles. Where appropriate, build in the design elements that play directly to reader tendencies and fix (or eliminate) the ones that don't. When you finally put the ad out into the field, make sure it includes mechanisms that will allow you to measure the response.

According to Garvin, if you don't actively apply newly acquired information, it will begin to fade from memory. If you want to remember what you've read here, there's a simple way: use it!

### Make it Yours

*"It can be said flatly that the mere act of listening to wise statements and sound advice does little for anyone. We cannot efficiently use the knowledge of others; it must be our own knowledge and insight we use."*

—CHARLES GRAGG,  
BECAUSE WISDOM  
CAN'T BE TOLD  
(AS QUOTED IN  
*Learning in Action*)

## GOOD CAUSES, GREAT ADS - CONT'D

### Why Can't We Talk About Something Nice?

*"A basic challenge that makes social communications so difficult but so rewarding if done successfully, is that the aim is to first transform the perceptions, then the attitudes of an audience on a subject they would probably prefer not to think about at all."*

—ED JONES,  
SOCIAL WORK:  
SAATCHI & SAATCHI'S  
CAUSE-RELATED IDEAS

### NOBODY SAID IT WAS GOING TO BE EASY

"I can't think of anything harder than moving people to activism," said Bari George, Planned Parenthood's Director of National Advertising. Virtually all of the people I spoke with in both the nonprofit and advertising communities expressed similar sentiments. While they generally accepted Starch's contention that the average newspaper or magazine reader has no inherent bias against nonprofit advertising, they know in their hearts it's an uphill fight.

Consider one small, but telling, example. Last year, the makers of M&M's spent \$10-million changing the name of their original candy line from "Plain" to "Milk Chocolate." (The word "plain," apparently, was just too, well...plain). By national advertising standards, even that sum is conservative when it comes to establishing a new product name – but when was the last time *you* had \$10-million to sort out a small image problem?

In the battle for a share of the public's attention, nonprofits are being outspent by hundreds of millions (if not billions) of dollars every year. So while the average reader probably has no bias against your print advertising, the playing field is hardly level. Situated between a glossy two-page spread for Victoria's Secret and a photo of a Ford Explorer in a breathtaking Alaskan landscape, your ad may not be quite as compelling as it was in the focus group.

To my mind, that's an argument to pay even *more* attention to the seven principles. By using design techniques that appeal to documented reader tendencies, you reduce the chances that your ad will be passed over or partly read. And given fewer dollars to work with, you simply must make the most of every chance you get.

Because a full page ad is a terrible thing to waste.





## GOOD BOOKS: *An Annotated Bibliography*

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If you're interested in exploring this subject further, I encourage you to consider some of the following books that contributed to the research for this project:

### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

*Ogilvy on Advertising*, by David Ogilvy (Vintage Books © 1983)

Acknowledged as an industry bible, this book has its share of time-tested principles along with some plainly outdated advice, but given when it was written, Ogilvy deserves credit for offering more of the former. Chapter 7, "Wanted: a renaissance in print advertising," is filled with specific recommendations and is a good starting point for the print ad newcomer.

*Scientific Advertising*, by Claude C. Hopkins (NTC Business Books © 1998)

Originally published in 1923, *Scientific Advertising* still has much to offer. Hopkins honed his skills in direct response marketing – where you know exactly how well your appeal did – and many of the fundamentals he offers on writing headlines and copy are echoed by today's top practitioners.

*Tested Advertising Methods*, by John Caples (Prentice Hall, Fifth Edition © 1997)

Caples worked at BBDO, taught copywriting at Columbia Business School, and wrote another industry bible that is now in its fifth edition. This updated version is *Advertising 101* with numerous pointers for print advertisers.

*Twenty Ads That Shook the World*, by James B. Twitchell (Crown Publishers © 2000)

My colleague Philip Sawyer calls this "easily the best book on advertising that I have ever read." Of course, that was for a back-cover blurb, so there may be a little logrolling there. There's not much hard advice here for the print advertising minded, but for an overview of the ad industry and its unique place in American life, *Twenty Ads* is a very entertaining and stimulating read.

## GOOD BOOKS: *An Annotated Bibliography* - CONT'D

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### CONTEMPORARY ADVERTISING

*The Art of Cause Marketing*, by Richard Earle (NTC Business Books © 2000)

Earle's certainly got the credentials (he worked on the "Crying Indian" campaign and won over 50 industry awards), but his advice seems most attuned to big-budget advertisers. The chapters on "Planning Your Campaign" and "Radio and Print" were most useful.

*The Copywriter's Bible*, Alastair Crompton, Commissioning Editor  
(The Designers and Art Directors Assoc. of the UK © 1995)

Subtitled "How 32 of the world's best advertising writers write their copy," this book is a treasure trove of good advice from men and women in the advertising trenches. Despite the name, there are many excellent pointers on layout as well.

*Cutting Edge Advertising*, by Jim Aitchison (Prentice Hall © 1999)

Aitchison analyzes over 200 print ads and brings in comments from the advertising legends (e.g., David Abbott, Neil French, Indra Sinha) who worked on them. Essential reading for public interest print advertisers.

*Hey, Whipple, Squeeze This*, by Luke Sullivan (John Wiley & Sons © 1998)

Named one of the top ad writers in the country by Adweek Magazine, Luke Sullivan offers firsthand advice with humor, sarcasm, and the scars of someone who's sat through more than his share of focus groups. Chapter 4, "Write When You Get Work," is filled with useful nuggets.

*Social Work: Saatchi & Saatchi's Cause-Related Ideas* (-273 Publishers © 2000)

A compendium of the agency's work from around the world for such diverse public interest clients as Action for AIDS, Greenpeace, New Zealand Red Cross, and UNICEF. Many of the print ads are terrific and inspiring.

*Which Ad Pulled Best?* by Phil Burton & Scott Purvis (NTC Business Books © 1996)

Interesting and annoying. The book opens with interviews featuring industry giants (e.g., George Gallup, Roy Grace, Jay Schulberg) who offer some excellent advice. When the book moves into its fifty side-by-side comparisons, however, it takes the form of a workbook which lists the relative merits of each ad *without* answering the question posed in its title. Like I said: annoying!

## GOOD BOOKS: An Annotated Bibliography - CONT'D

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### RELATED SUBJECTS

*The Attention Economy: Understanding the New Currency of Business*, by Thomas H. Davenport & John C. Beck (Harvard Business School Press © 2001)

Don't let the subtitle fool you: this book is for anybody who's battling for share of mind. Smart advertisers make it their business to know everything about their audience, and Davenport & Beck have many interesting things to say about how people parcel out attention in this age of information glut.

*Clean New World: Culture, Politics, and Graphic Design*, by Maud Lavin (MIT Press © 2001)

If you work in the reproductive rights arena, Chapter 9 ("A Baby and a Coat Hanger: Visual Propaganda in the U.S.") is a must-read. Otherwise, this book is strictly for design mavens who enjoy reading about German posters in the 1930s.

*Data Smog: Surviving the Information Glut*, by David Schenk (HarperEdge © 1997)  
Schenk brilliantly quantifies the impact of info-glut on our daily lives, but the book becomes a little more dated with each passing month. Nevertheless, it remains an excellent grounding for anyone who wants to understand what a cluttered marketplace of ideas really looks like.

*Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, by Antonio Damasio (Avon Books © 1994)

Damasio contends that emotions play a role in every decision we make, and he's got the science to back it up. If you still believe you're going to win your argument on the facts alone, read this book.

*The Social Life of Information*, by John Seely Brown & Paul Duguid (Harvard Business School Press © 2000)

Brown & Duguid wrote this book to challenge those net-heads who keep saying, "The web will change *everything*." Chapter 7, "Reading the Background," is a sobering reminder that how you present information strongly affects how people think about it. (Of course, anyone who submitted really thick term papers in college already knows this, but there's slightly more to it than that.)

## GOOD BOOKS: An Annotated Bibliography - CONT'D

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### RELATED SUBJECTS - CONT'D

*Tell Me a Story: Narrative & Intelligence*, by Roger Schank  
(Northwestern University Press © 1990)

According to Schank, director of the Institute of Learning Sciences at Northwestern University, stories help us remember, define ourselves, have stronger friendships, participate in a community – in short, they are a central part of our lives. The best way to reach and teach, Schank contends, is through stories, and his book makes a case that any advertiser should consider.

*The Triumph of Narrative: Storytelling in the Age of Mass Culture*, by Robert Fulford  
(Broadway Books © 1999)

Same territory as *Tell Me a Story*, but Fulford, a Canadian journalist, relies more on the anecdotal to make his case. Nevertheless, for anyone interested in learning more about the power of story, this is worthwhile reading.

*Visual Explanations*, by Edward R. Tufte (Graphics Press © 1997)

One of the classics on information design from the Yale professor who is widely considered a guru on the subject.

*Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising*, by Paul Messaris  
(Sage Publications © 1997)

Messaris, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School, offers scholarly observations on how photographic images can be more persuasive than words, why slightly altering photos is a remarkably effective technique for capturing attention, and how visual style can actually enhance the substance of your message. The scope of the book is well beyond print advertising, but the theories across all media are worth understanding.

# WHICH AD WORKED?



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