Chapter 1

Creativity

Concept Is Still King

What makes an advertisement great? The latest VR innovation? The slickest digital production techniques? The hottest celebrity endorser? A million Instagram followers? We hate to burst your bubble, but the answer has been the same since the first cave painting. Great ads begin with a great concept. The Big Idea. The One Thing.
Let's get right to the point. This book is based on developing strategies. Discovering insights. Recognizing patterns. Understanding consumers. Creating a compelling message. Sure, we’ll get into the craft of writing and designing. But everything starts with the concept. That’s the core of creativity.

We can’t teach you how to be creative. No one can. But you may be surprised how creative you are. You may not have been an A+ English student. But you may find you’re an excellent copywriter. You may not be a great sketch artist. But you may discover you have a talent for logo design or ad layouts. You may not know much about ad copy. But you may have a knack for building communities online through social media. You may never have to write a broadcast TV commercial. But you may be able to create innovative online videos. If you think advertising today is a dying proposition, think again. It’s an industry that keeps reinventing itself, and you will be part of that process.

What You Need to Learn

We’re drowning in a sea of unsolicited marketing messages. We strain all that through a fine filter of self-interest. Then we respond to a tiny fraction of what’s left. That’s if we haven’t found a way to avoid advertising altogether.

So as marketing professionals, your first task is not to fine-tune the message. Your primary focus is finding information your target audience wants to receive. That starts with the concept. This book will guide you through that process. If you’re lucky, you’ll take classes taught by working professionals—seasoned creatives who reveal the inner workings of our chaotic sink-or-swim industry. After a lot of trial and error, you’ll discover something about creative strategy and tactics—and probably a lot about yourself.

You’ll need to consider the following skills as you develop those concepts:

- The correct format for writing copy for traditional and new media
- The basic rules of copywriting and when to break them
- How to put more sell into your copy
- Design basics that apply to all media
- Sensitivity of issues that affect consumers
- Awareness of ethical and legal issues
- How to keep continuity throughout a campaign
- Knowing how to use emerging technology as a tool, not as an idea
- Understanding what endures in the face of a rapidly changing marketing environment
- The importance of presenting your work

“Properly practiced creativity can make one ad do the work of ten.”

Bill Bernbach, copywriter and founding partner, Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB)
Who Wants to Be Creative?

The title of copywriter or art director on your business card does not make you creative. You’ll find creative people in all walks of life. However, since you are probably in an ideation, content writing, or design class, we’ll start with some of the traditional job titles within our industry.

At the beginning of each semester we ask students, “Who wants to be a copywriter?” Typically, two or three look up from their iPhones and nod slightly. “Who wants to be an art director or a designer?” A few more raise their hands a few inches off the desk. Then we ask about creative director. That usually gets a little more interest because it sounds important. But almost no one realizes you have to be a copywriter or an art director first.

These are the most common reasons advertising students don’t think about becoming copywriters:

- “I might want to be an account planner or an account executive.”
- “I want to be a media director.”
- “I want to work in digital media.”
- “Words are boring. I’m more of a picture person.”

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• “Nobody reads anything anymore.”
• “I hated writing in high school English classes.”
• “I’m not sure I even want to be in advertising.”

Those are legitimate reasons, but we can make a case for learning about creative strategy and tactics to answer them.

- **Account executives** need to know how to evaluate creative work. Does it meet the objectives? What's the strategy? Why is it great or not so great? Account executives who understand the creative process become more valuable to the client and their agency.

- **Account planners** have to understand consumers, their clients’ products, market conditions, and many other factors that influence brand preference. In essence, they function as the voice of the consumer in strategy sessions. The skills required to develop creative strategy are key components in account planning.

- **Media folks** need to recognize the creative possibilities of each medium. They need to understand tone, positioning, resonance, and the other basics pounded into copywriters.

- **Social media specialists** have to be able to merge their mastery of digital media with creative skills. Someone has to write all those tweets and blog posts, while posting images on Pinterest and building online communities with a few well-chosen words.

- **Designers, art directors, producers, and graphic artists** should know how to write or at least how to defend their work: Why does it meet the strategies? Do the words and visuals work together? Does the font match the tone of the ad? Is the copy too long? (It's always too long for art directors.) As we'll stress throughout this book, writers also need to understand the basics of design. Design can't be separate from the concept.

- **Nobody reads something they’re not interested in:** But as the great Howard Gossage said, people will read what interests them and sometimes it’s advertising. Make it interesting and they’ll read it. Keep in mind, your job as a copywriter is to come up with the idea. That idea may not even need a headline or body copy.

- **There is English, and there is advertising copy and web content:** You’re not writing the Great American Novel. Or even a term paper. You are selling products and services with your ideas, which may or may not include your deathless prose. What you say is more important than how you write it. Ideas come first. Writing with style can follow.

- **Creativity outside of advertising:** You can put creative skills to work in more fields than advertising. The ability to gather information, process it, prioritize the most important facts, and develop a persuasive message is useful in almost every occupation. Even if you don’t aspire to be the next David Ogilvy, you might learn something about marketing, advertising, basic writing skills, and presenting your work. Who knows? You might even like it.
Before We Move Ahead, a Brief Nod to the Past

The AMC series Mad Men exposed the roots of modern advertising—along with the sexism, racism, and dirty dealings that permeated 1960s corporate culture. You may have heard about the show. But you probably never watched it. After all, it’s been a few years since Don Draper ended the series with the Big Idea for a musical Coke commercial.

During that so-called Golden Age, we saw a seismic shift in advertising. Stronger visuals. Simpler designs. Brand building. Iconic spokespersons. Engaging twists. And most of all, a refreshing poke at the status quo. While a lot of new ground was broken, looking back, there were still a lot of crappy ads.

Today, we find creative inspiration from visionaries like Corbett Drummey, cofounder of Popular Pays; Anna Hu, cofounder of Brizi; Étienne Mérineau, cofounder of Heyday.ai; or Jeff Lopez, founder of Gloob Marketing. As AI begins to shape our lives and mobile devices continue to be our window on the world, we may be entering a new Golden Age, driven by technology. Who knows? Maybe you could become a leader in the next creative revolution.

The Creative Team

Copywriters do a lot more than just write ads. In fact, writing may be only a small part of their jobs. Traditionally, a creative team has comprised a copywriter and an art director, with participation by web developers and broadcast producers. This team usually answers to a coach—the creative director.

Every player has his or her role, but in many cases the copywriter drives the creative process. However, once the art director understands the creative problem, he or she may become the idea leader. No matter who drives the process, the creative team needs to know the product frontward and backward, inside and out.

They have to understand who uses the product, how it compares with the competition, what’s important to the consumer, and a million other facts. No one does it all. Sometimes art directors...
write the best headlines. Or writers come up with a killer visual. Sometimes the inspiration comes from a comment on Instagram or a tweet. However, the creative leaders need to be able to sift that nugget of an idea from all the white noise that surrounds it.

What Else Does a Writer Do?

In small shops, the writers wear so many hats that it’s no wonder they develop big heads. Some of the responsibilities besides writing copy include the following:

- **Research**: Researching primary and secondary, and always insight driven
- **Strategy**: Taking the research and, working with others on the team, crafting a defined strategic direction that will bring captivate the target and build ROI
- **Ideation**: Taking the strategy and creating concepts that then become the foundation for the writing
- **Client contact**: Getting the facts direct from the source rather than filtered through an account executive, presenting those ideas, and defending the work
- **Online content**: Writing more digital content than traditional ad copy that includes websites, banners, articles, videos, blogs, social media posts and much more
- **Broadcast producer**: Finding the right director, talent, music, and post-production house to make the creative vision come to life
- **New business**: Gathering data, organizing the creative, working on the pitch, and presenting the work
- **Public relations**: Writing the news releases, planning promotional events, and even contacting editors
- **Creative management**: Much has been written about whether copywriters or art directors make the best creative directors. The answer is yes.

Ten Tips for Controlling the Creative Process

**Step 1: Getting the facts**: If you have a research department or account planners, take advantage of their knowledge. But don’t settle for someone else’s opinion. Talk to people who use the product

“**Our job is to read things that are not yet on the page.**”

Steve Jobs, founder and former CEO, Apple

A 15-second TV commercial encouraged viewers to ask their Google Home about the Whopper. The device played back a branded Wikipedia entry. Google and Wikipedia were not happy to have their technology used this way and shut it down. Still, the effort generated $135 million in earned media and snagged a Grand Prix at Cannes.
as well as those who don’t or won’t even consider it. Talk to retailers who sell the product. Look at competitive advertising: What’s good, and where is it vulnerable? In short, know as much as you can about the product, the competition, the market, and the people who buy it. Try to make the product part of your life.

**Step 2: Ideation:** If you’ve done your homework, you should know the wants and needs of the target audience and how your product meets those needs. From that base, you can direct the free flow of creative ideas. Concentrate on finding that killer creative idea rather than floundering in a sea of questions. But you must also be open to new ideas and independent thinking from your creative team members.

**Step 3: Picking up a pencil before you reach for the mouse:** This is critical, because it’s all about the creative concept. Even if you can only draw stick people, that’s okay. Where does the headline go? How much copy do you think you’ll need? What’s the main visual? How should the elements be arranged? Designers may ridicule your work. But they appreciate having the raw elements to massage it into a great-looking ad.

**Step 4: Finding the reference visuals:** Can you communicate your vision to the art director, creative director, account executive, or client? You can help your art director by finding photos, artwork, or design elements. The finished piece may not look like your original vision, but at least you have a point of reference. Browse the web, stock photo books, and awards annuals. The visual selection is a starting point, not the end game.

**Step 5: Working with the rest of the team:** For most creatives, the happiest and most productive years of their careers are spent collaborating with others. When two creative minds click, the whole really is greater than the sum of the parts. A great creative partnership, like any relationship, needs to be nurtured. While one person may want to drive the whole process, it’s best not to run over your teammates. They may come up with some ideas that will make you look like a genius.

**Step 6: Preselling the creative director and account executive:** Chances are you will not be working directly with the client, and even if you are, you probably won’t be the sole contact. That’s why you need the people who interface with the client to buy into your ideas. Maintaining a good relationship with the creative director not only protects your job; it also gives you an ally when you pitch your idea. The account executive represents the client in these discussions. He or she may try to poke holes in your logic or question your creative choices. That’s why every creative choice must be backed with sound reasoning. In the end, if the account executive buys it, you have a much better chance of convincing the client.

**Step 7: Selling the client:** Be prepared to defend your work. Many times your brilliant reasoning fails when the clients think with their wallets. Over time, you’ll know how far you can push a client. The trick is to know when to retreat so you can fight another day. Most clients don’t mind being challenged creatively, as long as there are sound reasons for taking chances.

There are three things you never want to hear from a client:

- “That looks just like the competitor’s ads. I want our ads to stand out.”
- “I was looking for something a lot more creative. Take some risks.”
- “You obviously don’t understand our product or our market.”

You won’t hear those things if you take care of Steps 1 to 6.

**Step 8: Getting it right:** Okay, you’ve sold the client. Now what? Your responsibilities don’t end when you hand your creation to the production team. Does the copy fit the way it should? If not, can you cut it? Can you change a word here and there to make it even better? Are the graphics what...
you envisioned? Your involvement is even more critical for broadcast. Did you have a specific talent in mind for voice or on-camera roles? Does the director understand and share your vision? Does the music fit?

Remember this quote from the great Leo Burnett: “Nothing takes the guts out of a great idea like bad execution.”

**Step 9: Maintaining continuity:** Almost everyone can come up with a great idea. Once. The hard part is extending that great idea in other media and repeating it in a fresh way. Over time, elements of a campaign tend to drift away from the original idea. Clients usually get tired of a look before the consumer. Art directors may want to “enhance” the campaign with new elements. Someone on the creative team has to monitor the elements of a campaign to make sure they are true to the original idea.

**Step 10: Discovering what worked and why:** If the ads in a campaign achieve their objectives, great! If they win awards, but the client loses market share, look out. Keep monitoring the efficacy of the campaign. What are the readership scores? What do the client’s salespeople and retailers think? How are sales? If you had to make any midcourse corrections, what would you do? If you never stop learning, you’ll never miss an opportunity to make the next one even better.

**Where Do I Go From Here?**

Some entry-level creatives add “senior” to their title after 3 or 4 years. But when you’re a senior before you reach 30, where do you go from there? You can take several paths.

**Copywriter/art director for life:** Many people are happy to hone their creative talents throughout their careers. You can do it if you continue to improve and never stop growing.

**Account service:** Do you like endless meetings? Writing off time? Filling out expense accounts? Losing golf games to clients? If you answered yes, you could become an account exec. In some small shops, the copy-contact system gives account execs an opportunity to create and creative types a reason to dress up. Art directors also work with clients as the primary agency contact.

**Account planner:** A natural for many writers who like research and enjoy being the conduit between

“In the game, the days are tough, the nights are long, and the work is emotionally demanding. But it’s all worth it, because the rewards are shallow, transparent and meaningless.”

Unknown copywriter
the account manager, the creative team, and the consumer. It involves thorough knowledge of research, marketing, creative, and media, as well as a lot of intuition. Most successful advertising copywriters already possess those skills.

Promotion director: Writers and art directors are idea people. So it makes sense to use that creativity to develop sales promotions, special events, sponsorships, specialty marketing programs, displays, and all the other marketing communication tools not included in “traditional advertising.” This is a rapidly growing area with a lot of potential for creative people.

Public relations writer: Although most PR people won’t admit it, it’s easier to write a news release than an ad. Most advertising writers won’t admit that editorial writing is usually more persuasive than advertising. PR writing involves much more than news releases though. You may become an editor for a newsletter or an in-house magazine. You may produce video news releases or schedule events, press conferences, and any number of creative PR efforts.

Internal advertising or public relations department: So far, we’ve outlined agency jobs. But other companies need talented creative people. You may write and design brochures. Or handle PR, trade shows, or media relations. In larger companies, you may handle promotional activities not covered by your ad agency. You may even write speeches for your CEO.

Web or interactive expert: Any writer or designer today should be web savvy. You don’t have to be a whiz at HTML, but having some technical expertise is a huge plus. As with any phase of advertising, creativity, not technology, is the most precious commodity.

Social media specialist: This job usually involves daily monitoring, posting, and content development. It can also mean developing social media marketing strategy. You have to know how and when social media works and when it doesn’t.

Content provider: Content includes native advertising, feature articles, white papers, online newsletters, and a lot more. You can provide content as part of an agency, in house, or as a freelancer. You need to find that sweet spot where the wants of the target audience intersect with the brand message.

Freelance writer or designer: Some people like a flexible schedule and a variety of clients. Success requires tremendous discipline and endless self-promotion. Plus the mental toughness to endure constant rejection. Short deadlines. And long stretches between assignments.
Video and broadcast producer or director: Maybe you have the knack for writing scripts, selecting talent, editing, and doing other elements of audio and video production. Creative talent and a logical mind are the keys. Technological expertise can be learned on the job.

Creative strategist: Some agencies specialize in strategic thinking—the view from 30,000 feet. Once the strategy is sold, the agency collects the money before anything is created. The people who actually make things—copywriters, designers, art directors, web developers, and the rest—get paid when the real work is completed.

Consultant: Some companies (and agencies) hire outside talent to provide a fresh point of view. Other times, consultants set the strategy that gives the creative their marching orders. Too often consultant is another word for unemployed. Sometimes they are no more than repackaged freelancers.

What’s in It for Me?

Let’s be honest. If you want a creative career, you’re interested in only three things: fame, fortune, and fun. Not necessarily in that order.

Fame: Everyone wants recognition. Especially Millennials. Advertising is unsigned. So, there are only two ways to get recognized—awards and having people say, “You’re really the person who did that?” Awards may be important for your fragile self-esteem. But they can also be the key to building your career. If your stuff is good, be sure to enter your local ad club’s competition. If you win, you will get noticed, and it could help you land that dream job. Continue entering and winning to build that reputation as a top-tier creative.

Fortune: Creatives make as much or more than other people in advertising. It all depends on your experience, talent, the economy, and a million other factors. Senior creatives can earn more than some doctors—without all those years of post-graduate school, internships, and residency. You just need to know how to sell toilet paper or health insurance versus how to save lives. With student loans and the high cost of living in a trendy neighborhood, all that money doesn’t go as far as it used to. But you can still afford your daily venti iced-skinny-hazelnut-macchiato-sugar free syrup-extra shot-light ice-no whip.

Fun: You can be famous and well compensated and still be unhappy in any business. You can still get a kick out of solving problems creatively, even if you’re not well known or a millionaire. It’s still a treat to work with other creatives; interact with musicians, actors, and directors; win presentations; travel to exotic locations; and most of all be treated as an equal partner in the creative process by the client. When the work becomes too tedious, the clients become intolerable, and the daily grind of cranking out mediocre creative starts wearing thin, it may be time to move on. Perhaps redirect your creative energy to more worthy causes. They need great creative too. And they are usually more grateful to get it. When the work loses its meaning, or if you start losing your edge, you should consider getting out.

The hashtag #MeToo gave victims of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace, a unifying voice and platform to speak out that went viral and has since generated millions of posts online.

Alyssa Milano
@Alyssa_Milano

If you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.

Me too.

Suggested by a friend: “If all the women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted wrote ‘Me too.’ as a status, we might give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem.”

4:21 PM - 15 Oct 2017

The hashtag #MeToo gave victims of sexual assault and harassment, especially in the workplace, a unifying voice and platform to speak out that went viral and has since generated millions of posts online.
This student-created campaign for Jelly Belly was for three different types of digital media, including Instagram, Pinterest, promoted pin, and a static banner.

Common Sense, Science, and Doing the Right Thing

The rules that guide successful advertising continue to evolve. But one rule will always be true: Advertising is a business. A business populated by a lot of crazy people, but still a business. We still have to persuade someone to buy something. This leads to “creative schizophrenia”—the internal conflict between the stuff you want to do and the stuff clients make you do. If you want to get a job, you need cool, cutting-edge stuff in your portfolio. But it’s not usable in the real world. When you land that job, you’ll be forced to do a lot of boring stuff that sells products but looks terrible in your book. So hold your nose and smile. Throughout your career, you’re going to do a lot more crap than award-winning stuff.
Psychologists have spent years studying creativity. Daniel Pink used a lot of right brain/left brain rationale to describe how we have moved from the Information Age into a new Conceptual Age. Didn’t we tell you it’s all about concepts?

Today we know that creativity is not an isolated right-brained activity. In fact, the whole right brain/left brain dichotomy is being debated. The entire brain plays a role in what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls “flow . . . a phenomenon constructed through an interaction between producers and audience.” Flow requires flexibility and “the capacity to adapt to the advances, opportunities, technologies, and changes that are a part of day-to-day living.” Advertising creativity is the end product of balancing logic with irrationality, artistic freedom with the constraints of the creative problem, and divergent thinking with convergent thinking. It’s about making strategy come to life.

Our new Conceptual Age is based on changing demographics as much as the changing needs in the marketplace. Creative, empathic ideas do not come from a homogeneous group of individuals. They come from a highly varied mix of individuals—a mix of people bringing diverse backgrounds and experiences to the creative process. Diversity of thought and experience will be the game changer. It’s the driver of optimal flow.

Today too many ad agencies suffer from a lack of diversity. Especially in their creative department. ADCOLOR, founded in 2007, is an industry organization dedicated to championing diversity and inclusion in creative industries. Leo Burnett was one of the first agencies that acknowledged this. They started the No2Six6 movement to help correct it. Burnett’s research showed the ad industry would not achieve equality for another 66 years if things did not change. So, as ADCOLOR suggests, it’s time for the industry to help individuals and organizations “rise up” and teach today’s leaders how to “reach back” and find others who deserve to be noticed and promoted. Most people agree the advertising industry has a long way to go. The wave of revelations in
entertainment and media (think #MeToo) shows just how pervasive harassment and discrimination can be. We hope that there will be some serious soul-searching followed by positive action across all industries, including advertising.

As you’ll see in subsequent chapters, diversity in advertising merits discussion. Like Csikszentmihalyi and Pink, we too think diversity of thought and experience is at the heart of advertising’s future.

Knowing What Makes the Consumer Tick

The study of consumer behavior involves psychology, sociology, and marketing, and quite a bit of insight. What do they buy? Why? Where? When? How often? Marketers attempt to dissect buyers’ decision-making process, both for individuals and for groups.

Researchers study demographics, psychographics, and lifestyles to understand what people want and how they want to get it. Billions of dollars are spent to test new products and the consumer’s willingness to buy. Sometimes the most successful marketing concepts spring from some crazy idea no research could predict. Google, Uber, Amazon, and Snapchat to name a few. Steve Jobs relied on intuition instead of focus groups to develop products that consumers didn’t even know they wanted. In the process, they created the most valuable technology company in the world.

We’ll explore some of the ways you can discover consumer’s wants and needs. But unless you’re the next Steve Jobs, you may need some research to guide you.

A little bit of creative puffery from a talented student. She tweeted about her ad, and the next day Rishi offered her an internship. Liquid Zen indeed.
Creating From the Consumer’s Point of View

If you remember nothing else from this chapter, remember this:

**People do not buy things.**

**They buy satisfaction of their wants and needs.**

You may have studied Abraham Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs. This model is usually depicted as a pyramid, ranging from the most basic needs to the most complex and sophisticated. According to Maslow, the needs at each level must be met before one can progress to the next level. Some communication theorists have expanded on Maslow’s list. Some texts list more than 30 needs. This is how we sum up wants and needs from a marketing communication standpoint:

- Comfort (convenience, avoid pain and discomfort)
- Security (physical, financial)
- Stimulation (aesthetic, physical)
- Affiliation (esteem, respect)
- Fulfillment (self-satisfaction, status)

So how does all this talk about Maslow and wants and needs play in the ad business today? That’s where account planning comes into play. The account planner connects the business side and the creative side of a campaign. The planner works with the account manager to understand what the client is looking for. He or she relates that to what the consumer wants. The planner helps the creative team expand on the creative brief and leads them to that One Thing. Planners want to know what makes people tick. To bring the consumers’ voice into the strategic process. We provide more detail about account planning in Chapter 2.

Once you discover the consumers’ sweet spot, you have to convince them your brand satisfies their wants and needs. One of the best explanations can be found in this simple sentence: Don’t tell me about your grass seed; talk to me about my lawn. Think about that.
People aren’t looking for seed. They need a play area for their kids. They want a calm green space for relaxing or a yard the neighbors will envy. Security. Comfort. Fulfillment. Wants and needs. A $30 Timex will tell the time just as well as a $3,000 Rolex. (Well, close enough for most folks.) What wants and needs are satisfied by spending 1,000% more? Hint: It’s not about telling time.

“These exceptional student ads call into question how women and girls are portrayed every day in advertising.”

Leo Burnett, copywriter and founder, Leo Burnett

Celebrities have been used to pitch everything from A to Z. Usually it makes the most sense when the celeb is conceptually a part of the idea or there’s some connection between what the brand stands for and what the celebrity is all about. In this case, you could argue that the Big Fella, seen here in a web execution from Icy Hot, has had his share of pain and soreness after a long and legendary NBA career.
Your 5 Criteria

The best advice I received just before graduating advertising school was this: Make a list of five things you’d want in a perfect job, and let those 5 Criteria guide you in your search.

Some of my classmates didn’t hear (or heard but didn’t take) this advice. They went to interview after interview and would turn down offers. They’d say things like “It just didn’t feel right.” But I think some simply didn’t know what they were looking for in the first place.

Having your 5 Criteria not only helps you shed a lot of uncertainty up front but they help you ask better questions once you’re interviewing. If working on a big national account is important to you, make that part of your 5 Criteria, and ask about that account during an interview. If you want to work for a famous creative director, make that part of your list, and when you get an interview at an agency with said famous creative director, make sure you ask how much contact you’ll have with him or her.

Your 5 Criteria can be almost anything—from working on a particular coast to having a company match on your 401(k). If it’s important to you, let that guide you.

Except money. Money can’t be party of your 5 Criteria. The fact that you’ll be a salaried employee should be a given. And if making a lot of money is really one of your top priorities when you’re just starting your career, you might want to quit advertising and try something else. Like pharmaceuticals or pyramid schemes.

Here are the 5 Criteria I used when I left advertising school, in no particular order:

- I want to work at an agency that’s won several national awards in the past 5 years.
- I want to work at an agency that has fewer than 50 employees.
- I want a creative director who will be a good mentor.
- I want an opportunity to work on television.
- I want to work in a cool city.

These aren’t necessarily characteristics of “the perfect job.” But they’re things I thought were important when I was looking for work. Some of them (like working at a smaller agency) were based on personal experience. Some (like wanting a good mentor) were things I knew I needed to build a career.

After graduation, I took the first job I was offered. Not because I was desperate. Or because I was afraid nothing else would come my way. I took it because it fit my 5 Criteria. I knew exactly what I was looking for and couldn’t see the point in continuing the search.

So, here’s your homework: Write down your 5 Criteria for your perfect job. And let them guide you.

Greg Christensen, copywriter and group creative director, The Richards Group, Dallas
richards.com
I wasn’t always motivated to be an entrepreneur, but I always liked starting things—projects, clubs, even a band. My first company started in college, and it happened in a pretty roundabout way. I saw my roommate was making money buying and reselling concert tickets. I didn’t have enough cash to get started, so I borrowed money from some friends who were in a club on campus with me. After a few months of making good money, but feeling like we weren’t adding real value, we decided to start something else together, so we brainstormed.

We saw a need for a service linking college students wanting to work as tutors to local parents in search of one. It was easy to start, simple, and added value. We created a business plan over winter break, filed as Tribe Tutoring, LLC on February 28, 2011, and started to make a little extra cash. We wanted to automate some of the matching, so we hired a software engineer to build a site for us. It worked for a while, but when the original cofounders weren’t on campus and we tried to hire someone to run the company things started to fall apart. We decided to shut it down, and even though it didn’t work, that was okay. A great side effect of starting things is that even if they don’t work out they open doors to new opportunities.

My efforts in starting Tribe Tutoring got the attention of advertising agency, Leo Burnett. After hearing about what we were working on, they offered me an internship. The internship turned into a full-time position, and shortly after joining Leo Burnett I met my soon-to-be cofounder, Allan Holmes.

Allan and I had a mutual love for working on side projects. I kept a list of all of Allan’s ideas—we had 30 of them—and tried at least two very seriously. Popular Pays was one of them. Popular Pays got to a point where we realized we had to leave our day jobs to turn it into what we wanted, so we quit Leo Burnett. At one of our first meetings and with only $3,000 in savings, we sat down to talk about our goals for the company. We realized at its core our motivations were to make something that was worth sharing. From then on, for every decision, hire, or product idea we would ask ourselves this: Is it worth sharing? It became our mission: Create Something Worth Sharing.

The early days of starting a company are hard. Everything is so fragile when you’re just three people. Allan and Nathan, my partners, worked to sign up users while I tried to get investors. It took all the runway we had. Three months after we quit and with $120 in my account, we finally got our first $20,000 in the door. When we raised $100,000, it felt like so much money that we’d never need to raise money again, but of course we did. With $6 million in capital and 40 teammates later, I realized that funding the business and other challenges—nailing the right product or market fit, adjusting to the blistering pace of today’s tech landscape, hiring the right people, etc.—never really go away. The scale just changes. It’s been incredibly rewarding to be a part of a great team, to continually face down bigger and bigger challenges, and to see that what we’re producing is truly worth sharing. I’m more excited than ever about the journey we’re on and very grateful for how far we’ve already come.¹¹

Corbett Drummey, cofounder and CEO, Popular Pays, 2018 Forbes 30 Under 30, Chicago @popularpays
Chapter 1

**Leo Burnett**
Founder of the agency that still bears his name, he established a new creative style of advertising, along with many memorable characters that are still working today, including Tony the Tiger, the Jolly Green Giant, the Keebler Elves, the Marlboro Man, and the Pillsbury Doughboy. Leo Burnett believed that creativity made an advertisement effective but, at the same time, that creativity required believability.

**Mary Wells Lawrence**
While CEO, chair, and president of the legendary Wells Rich Greene agency, Mary Wells was the highest paid, best known woman in American business. She was also the first female CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Her innovative campaigns for Braniff, Alka-Seltzer, Benson & Hedges, and American Motors brought a fresh new look to established brands. At age 40, she became the youngest person ever inducted into the Copywriting Hall of Fame.

**Gina Grillo**
The Advertising Club of New York is one of the oldest and most prestigious organizations in the industry. Grillo is president and CEO of Ad Club, which has over 5,000 members. Club members can access a network of thought leaders who fuel creativity and work toward greater diversity and inclusion while offering professional development training. Grillo has been with the Ad Club for more than 20 years, and she has transformed it into the voice of modern advertising. She’s also shaped the conversation around diversity of thought, start-up innovation, and the support of Young Professionals. The Ad Club, now more than 120 years old, remains a trusted source for thought leadership, while giving back to the community and fostering young and diverse talent.

**Sarah Hofstetter**
Now the chief operating officer at 360i, Sarah Hofstetter basically grew up in the agency. She took it from a scrappy digital shop known for its playfulness and highly effective social programs to a fully integrated agency. You might remember 360i’s Dunk in the Dark Oreo work, of recent Super Bowl fame. That’s the kind of work Hofstetter is known for. One of the biggest contributions Hofstetter has made to the industry is taking on more pro bono work than the norm, with the goal of helping non-profits excel in their various sectors. She’s a graduate of Queens College and has been a volunteer at Masbia Soup Kitchen for more than 7 years.
Selling Fuzzy to Generation Z

Generation Z, that’s most of you, was born between 1995 and 2010 (depending on what data set you are looking at). This generation were children or teens when the Great Recession of 2008 occurred. After the market crashed and people lost jobs, many shifts occurred in the industry of higher education. As student loans skyrocketed, parents and students looked for more ROI from their education. If they were going to spend time and money in higher education, they wanted a guaranteed job after college.

Fast-forward 10 years later to 2018. Degrees that showed a clear career path (e.g., “techie” degrees like engineering) showed skyrocketing enrollment, while other degrees that did not have a clear career path (e.g., “fuzzy” humanities degrees like English and history) saw large declines in enrollment. Yet, the World Economic Forum, employers, and talent forecasters repeatedly said it was the soft skills that people with humanities degrees provided that would be most sought after in 2020, especially with the addition of AI. The question for higher education branding, and the advertising professionals that serve this sector, was how to engage a generation of people that want a clear career pathway and ROI in the humanities.

In 10 years, the children of Generation Z also changed and were vastly different from the popularly discussed Millennials (born 1980–1995). While Millennials are thought to value the experience economy (buying experiences, not just products), Generation Z is thought to value the transformation economy (buying a series of experiences that will transform the self, not one experience or a product). In addition, quantitative and qualitative national data sets show that Generation Z has had to contend with many large political, industrial, and global shifts, which have influenced their buying habits. For example, one survey found that after seeing the generations before them affected by the Great Recession, this generation values financial stability. Accordingly, Generation Z is more careful with their purchases.

Given these changes, the president of a university that has both engineering and humanities schools is asking you, as the brand manager, to rethink advertising strategy and creative executions for prospective students. The president wants to keep engineering enrolment increasing due to the focus on STEM nationally, especially for women. However, she also wants to increase enrolment in the humanities.

Discussion Questions

1. Define the advertising problem the president is trying to solve.
2. What do you know about Generation Z that might help you create a new messaging that would appeal to those interested in majoring in the humanities? What messaging and creative ideas do you think would appeal to Generation Z when it comes to the humanities?
3. What channels would be best for delivering the advertising messages and creative produced?
4. How would you strategically solve the issue that the president presented about increasing enrolment in both engineering and the humanities?

Sheetal Patel, lecturer, associate director, and content lead, Stanford University, Graduate School of Business Career Management Center

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1. Get Out of Your Head

It’s easy to get caught up all the advertising jargon and buzzwords when you’re studying this field. But, ultimately, it’s a communications job. You’re talking to other people: human beings. Not only is it vital to empathize but it’s equally as important to get out of your own head and experiment with other voices and perspectives. Here are a couple of writing prompts that can help you do just that:

- You are an older high school football coach who is retiring after the season. Your team is in the state championship, down by a lot. Write a half-time speech that will spark a comeback.
- Your lifelong best friend is getting married. Write a toast for the rehearsal dinner.
- You’re a first-time director who’s just won a major award. Write an acceptance speech. Be mindful of the length, because the orchestra is queued up and will play you off in less than 60 seconds. We can hear the string section already.
- Okay, for an added bonus, take what you’ve written and try turning it into a script for a radio commercial for a brand, product, or service.
- Be prepared; you just might have to share this in class.

2. It’s All About Me

The more you know about a subject, the better the concept. So, let’s start with something you know best—yourself. Write a script, and produce a 60-second radio commercial about yourself. Why you are unique. Why you’d be a good friend, employee, or maybe something nobody knows about you. (One student admitted his secret passion for cutoff jeans.) Be outrageous—after all, anything is possible on radio. (One student mimicked a sexy Barry White voice and sang a verse from “Let’s Get It On.”) Recording and producing the spots doesn’t require a lot of skill. If you can edit audio with Adobe Audition or some other software, fine. But most students can do this on their smartphones.

Introduce yourself. Provide a short setup for the commercial, and play it for class. Be prepared for thunderous applause.

3. Personal Branding Timeline

- Create a map moving across your life in 5-year increments. Begin with birth and end with your current age (which might be less than a 5-year gap). For each 5-year stage, generate a list of the brands you associate with that time of your life.
- After each brand, write a single sentence about what that brand meant to you at that time.
- Now extend this map out by 10-year increments: 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70. List brands you think will be a part of your life. Again, write a single sentence about why you believe each brand will be relevant to you at that time.
Now discuss what factors are influencing your choices: familiarity, aspiration, current use, personal or family associations, trends, and so on.

Next, see if there are any brands that were constant over a long period of time. Discuss what makes those brands have traction over time. What inherited qualities and brand messages enable brand loyalty?

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