

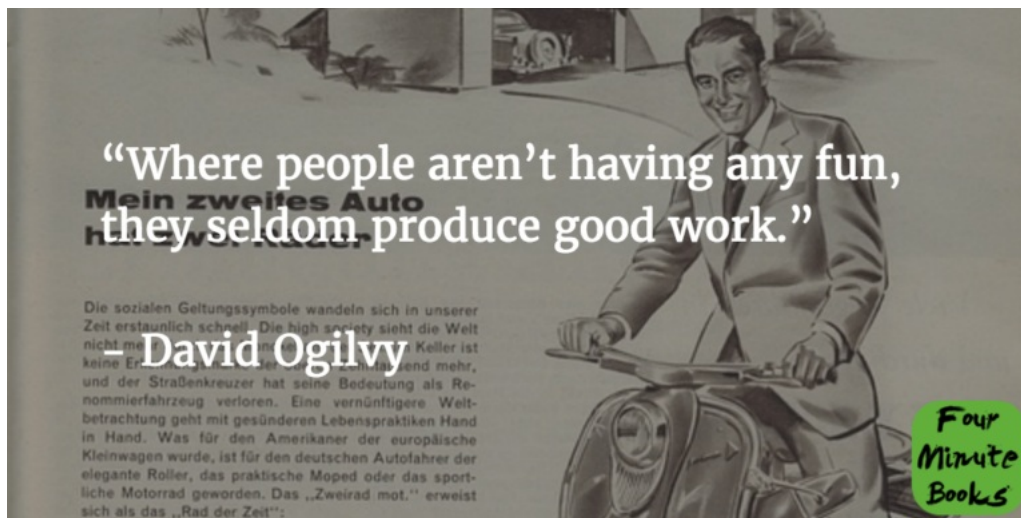
Confessions Of An Advertising Man Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Confessions Of An Advertising Man is the marketing bible of the 60s, written by “the father of advertising,” David Ogilvy to inspire a philosophy of honesty, hard work and ethical behavior in his industry.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



When I started getting more interested in marketing in late 2012, I began to pay more attention to the advertisements I saw on TV, billboards and around the web. As in the US, most ads run by big corporations are bad. They either lack creativity, miss the point or the target audience, are sloppily executed or downright confusing. But every once in a while, a really interesting spot pops up.

Like this speed-reading train ride video for Deutsche Bahn, or this moving story of a truck driver coming home for Christmas from Coca-Cola. I soon learned that these rare exemptions weren't due to a sudden spark of genius in those companies' PR departments, but because they hired advertising agencies.

In Germany (and across the globe) Ogilvy & Mather is one of the most famous ones, and it was founded by the author of *Confessions Of An Advertising Man*, David Ogilvy, in 1948. Ogilvy is known as the “father of advertising” and had a huge impact on the industry during his lifetime, especially in the 60s, promoting honesty, ethics and hard work as a philosophy for marketers.

I love marketing, but I do believe there's a lot to be done to bring these exact values back to it in 2016 and beyond, especially considering that today, every single one of us is a media company.

That's why I'm excited to share 3 lessons from *Confessions Of An Advertising Man* with you:

1. Only market things you believe in.
2. Advertising is meant to sell, not to entertain.
3. Use facts, mystery and the latest research to create good advertisements.

Ready for a dose of ethic marketing? Here we go!

Lesson 1: Only sell stuff you believe in.

If all marketers lived by this mantra, and nothing else, I 100% believe we would not live in a world where marketing is considered as sleazy and has a negative connotation right from the get-go.

In marketing as in any other industry, the vast majority of players is looking for the quick fix, the sale today, instead of playing the long game, which results in a lot of ads for products, which probably shouldn't be sold at all.

One of David's most famous quotes is this:

“The customer is not a moron. She's your wife.” ~ David Ogilvy

He believed in soft-spoken advertisements, delivering the facts, not the fiction and never ever lying to people in your advertisements. That, of course, means you have to **stand 100% behind the product in question**, whether it's soap, a soft drink or an airline, so you can write ads without lying – ads that you'd be comfortable with, even if your own family read them.

This is also what led David to only accept accounts for which he truly believed he could outperform the previous agency. In marketing, it might be more important than anywhere else that your north star is integrity.

Lesson 2: In the end, ads are meant to sell, not to entertain. Focus on the basics.

Did that Coke video above move you? It moved me. I mean, how can you not feel for the lone, hard-working truck driver, who finally gets a break and is reunited with his family on Christmas?

As inspiring as that story is, however, you can bet that **if it hadn't increased Coca-Cola sales, Ogilvy would not have run this campaign.**

The definition of an ad is that it's made to sell something, which, while obvious, tends to be forgotten easily over all the creative work and energy good advertising agencies put into their campaigns. Sometimes I spot ads, which, while oozing with creativity, like clever puns and stunning images, completely forget selling the product.

Having to laugh, feeling inspired or being shocked are all side effects of great marketing, not the goal. So instead of trying to win a painting competition or a Pulitzer Prize with your copy, go simple. If your moisturizer makes women above 35 look younger, say “this is how women above 35 can look younger.”

Great ads are as simple as that.

Lesson 3: Use facts, intrigue and scientific research to create great advertisements.

As the world gets noisier and noisier, creating unique marketing campaigns that stand out gets harder and harder. David Ogilvy used a 3-pronged approach to get people’s attention and hold it, and it’s still as relevant in 2016 as it was in 1963 (when this book came out).

1. **Give people the facts, even if they’re not special.**
2. **Use mysterious and intriguing images.**
3. **Integrate research findings into your ads.**

Just because it’s a given that an airline implements comprehensive safety measures doesn’t mean that marketing it as a benefit won’t work. When Ogilvy worked with KLM, that’s exactly what they did – and since no other airline talked about safety, it worked well.

Images are a great way to open curiosity gaps, stop customers dead in their tracks and make them think and ponder. An image of a new, mysterious symbol with a hint how to find out more about it, is often a lot better than trying to explain the entire premise of The Hunger Games on one poster.

Lastly, if scientific research shows that color photos work better than black and white ones, and photos in general are a lot better than paintings, why ignore what researchers have put hard work into finding out? Staying up to date on the latest research in marketing will be well worth your time.

Confessions Of An Advertising Man Review

Confessions Of An Advertising Man made me feel proud and hopeful. Why? Because even in a time when bad, mass media marketing was just beginning, there were already people trying to reverse the trend. David Ogilvy was one of them. Can’t think of a better person to learn the basics of advertising from. Great read for marketers and anyone who’s really active on social media, even just privately.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- What the profit margin in advertising is and why that means you should choose your clients carefully
- Why your best people should always work with existing clients, and not acquire new ones
- The two character traits that make for a great working atmosphere at an advertising agency
- How to combine having high standards with leading by example
- What you should do to create advertisements that last for decades
- A few guiding pointers for clients of agencies
- Three things young people can do to thrive in advertising

Who would I recommend the Confessions Of An Advertising Man summary to?

The 20 year old, who spends most of her time after college classes posting pictures on Instagram, the 27 year old copywriter, who just got his first job as an assistant account manager at an advertising agency, and anyone who's sick of bad advertisements.