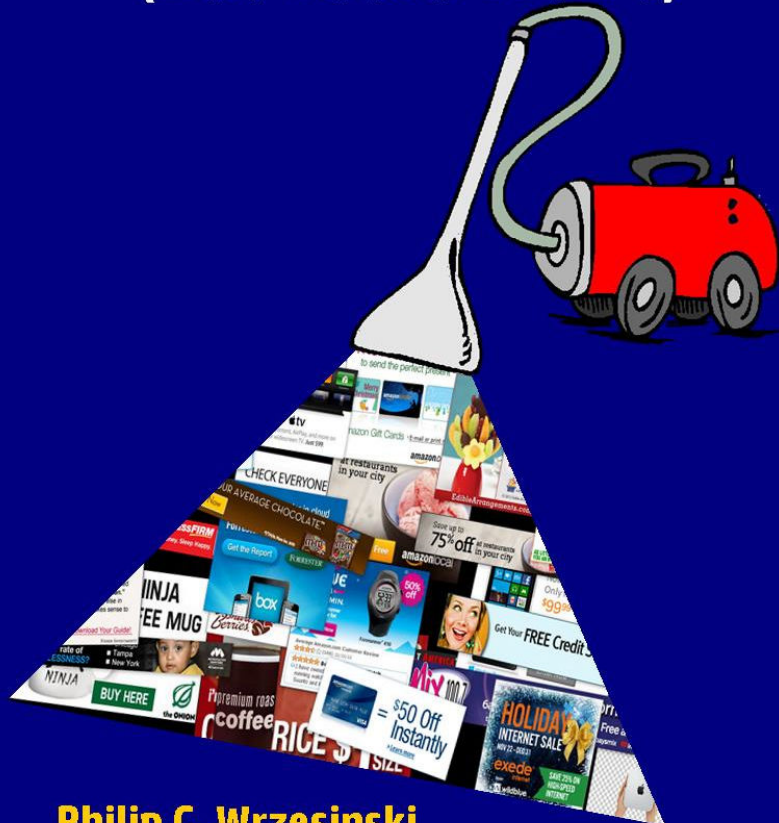


# MOST ADS SUCK

(But Yours Won't)



**Philip C. Wrzesinski**

- ◆ Have you ever gone to a Super Bowl Party just to watch the ads?
- ◆ Have you ever wondered why you remember some ads (*but not the companies who ran them*)?
- ◆ Have you ever run an ad based on a template the ad salesperson uses for all his clients?
- ◆ Have you ever felt like John Wanamaker and didn't know which ads *weren't* working?
- ◆ Do you write content to persuade?

**This book is for you!**

# Most Ads Suck (But Yours Won't)

[www.PhilsForum.com](http://www.PhilsForum.com)

## Foreword

Who will use this book? Anyone who writes content to persuade including web content, ad copy, magazine articles, emails and newsletters, and even speeches. If you write to persuade, you'll find this book relevant and useful. If you write to connect, you'll find this book relevant and useful. If you write to spark change, you'll find this book relevant and useful.

The character who leads you through this book is You. You're like me in your curiosity and desire to learn. That's why you're reading this in the first place. You lead yourself through the first eight chapters discovering new ideas and revelations as you go. I will take over in Chapter 9 to show you how the principles you learn in this book apply to all different types of businesses, including yours.

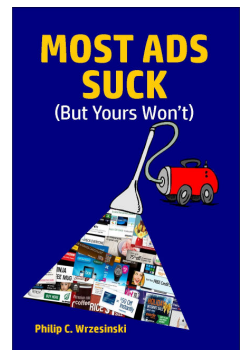
You will still need to bring a few tools to the table to make this book work best for you. Most importantly, you have to know your Core Values. For the purpose of this book, you will have the values of Freedom, Curiosity, Diligence, and Education. You will use your own Curiosity to explore the concepts of how to make your advertising more effective. You will use Diligence to do the research you need to give yourself the tools (Education) to write your own content in your own words. That will give you the Freedom to succeed in your business without being led blindly down fruitless paths to more boring, useless, ineffective advertising. My own Core Values are Having Fun, Helping Others, Education, and Nostalgia. See

if you can spot them throughout this book.

I first presented this information at the Jackson Retail Success Academy™ back in 2011. Fourteen frying pans later, it is an audience favorite because the applications are endless. You will find yourself using the principles in this book for far more than advertising. You'll see the influence of this book in all your writings, presentations, sales calls, and trainings. I have a ten-minute TED-style talk centered around how Chapter 4 applies to all levels of communication.

I want you to share this book. I want you to dog-ear some pages, underline some passages, write your own notes in the margins. Then pass this book along to your friends in a similar position. I expect you to take exceptions to different principles based on your own experiences. That's why I call them principles instead of rules. (And also because you're the kind of person who hates the word "rules" and would immediately try to find ways to break them.)

I especially expect or even encourage you to find fault with many of the sample ads in the back of the book. That's okay. As Roy H. Williams taught me many years ago, an advertisement is like a magnet. Its ability to attract is in exact proportion to its ability to repel. If you feel any emotion at all towards the ad samples, I will have done my job. If you really don't like them, I challenge you to write better ones. Send them to me. I would love to read them.



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## Chapter 1 – Most Ads Suck

*“Every customer is the right customer. What you’re looking for is the right moment.” – Roy H. Williams*

You’re in a room with friends, a plate of nachos in your hands. It’s the first Sunday in February. It’s a Super Bowl Party. Everyone is glued to the TV. Groans and high-fives and laughter fill the air. Some of your friends are second-guessing every move, every decision on the screen. Everyone is cheering for their favorite, even making excuses when it doesn’t go so well.

Then the game comes back on and you head to the bathroom then back to the kitchen to refill your nacho plate.



Once a year you watch the ads. One night out of three hundred and sixty-five you don’t fast forward or change the channel or—in many cases—even care about the actual programming, just the ads in between.

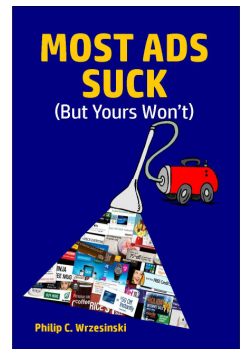
You remember the good ones from years past. You remember how a few years ago the Budweiser Armed Forces in Airport commercial made you feel when everyone started clapping slowly, then faster until the whole airport was standing and applauding the soldiers walking through. You remember the kid looking you in the eyes and telling you he wanted to work in middle management even

though you can’t recall which employment service did that ad and which one had the monkeys in the office.

You also remember groaning at some of the really bad ones, wondering how in the world that ad got approved for production, let alone a multi-million-dollar TV slot. You wish your own business was like one of these big companies with millions of dollars to waste on advertising knowing that in two weeks no one would remember and you would still have tens of millions to spend on the boring, crappy ads everyone runs the rest of the year.

Why is that? Why, you wonder, do all these companies spend so much time, money and creativity on their Super Bowl ads only to run them once a year and leave you with the same tired sales-pitchy stuff the rest of the year? While you’re at it, you wonder why so many companies spend so much time, money and creativity only to miss the mark by a wide margin. Puppymonkeybaby? Really, Mountain Dew? That’s the best you could come up with?

Your friends tell you they’ve switched to satellite radio. Too many ads on regular radio, they say. Other friends tell you the greatest invention is the DVR or Netflix or Hulu. Don’t have to suffer through so many ads, they say. They do have a point. You seem to recall some study about how you are bombarded with over 5,000 advertising messages a day. You’re not sure if that number is



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right, but you do know that everywhere you turn there is another promotional message staring at you. Heck, every sub-segment of the Super Bowl was *"brought to you by ..."* some auto/food/beer/insurance/drug company.

Maybe there are too many ads.

But there you are on the first Sunday in February, ignoring the brought-to-you-by announcements and even the game itself, and instead comparing notes with your friends on which ads were the funniest, the most moving, the most memorable.

Suddenly it dawns on you. The real problem with advertising isn't that there are too many ads. The real problem is that most ads suck. If they were more creative or funny like the ones you saw tonight, you'd pay attention. If they were entertaining, you wouldn't be switching channels. If they touched your heart, you might actually take action.

You think you've figured it out. You think you've figured out what famed retailer John Wanamaker couldn't when he famously said, *"Half of my ad budget is wasted. The problem is I don't know which half."* It's the half with the lousy, looks-like-everyone-else, boring, stupid ads.

You want to shout it from the rooftop. You've solved the advertising equation. The first half, at least.



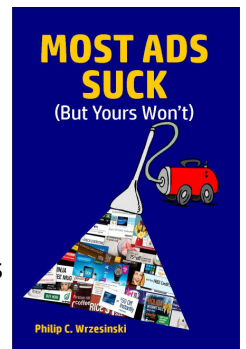
You start thinking how fun it would be to meet with the advertising executives of every major company out there and tell them to quit spending all their money on Super Bowl ads and instead spend that money to make the rest of their ads better.

Then you wonder. *"Wait, do I have it all wrong? Is it really that simple? That these billion-dollar companies with their million-dollar advertising budgets and their million-dollar ad agencies with all their fancy metrics just don't get it?"*

Yes, you do have it right. Yes, you understand what many ad agencies and major corporations don't. You get it because you're the consumer. You know what works on you and what doesn't. You know what gets you to tune in and tune out.

You're also smart enough to realize that some ads just aren't speaking to you. You still appreciate clever writing, creative copy, and smart messages. If they're entertaining enough, you'll tolerate ads written for someone other than you. But your internal filter shuts everything down as soon as it looks, sounds, or smells like the plethora of phony, deceiving, too-good-to-be-true ads out there.

You're about to start making a list of the worst offenders, the ones whose offices you'll visit first to tell them about your new revelation, when it dawns on you. You know what they shouldn't be doing.



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But if they ask you how to make their ads more interesting and memorable and effective, you don't know where to start.

Hmmm ...

## Chapter 2 – It's the Message, Not the Media

*"I've never met a business owner whose advertising failed because they were reaching the wrong people."* – Roy H. Williams

The game ended late. You got home later. Your spouse has already rolled over and gone to sleep. You can't sleep. Your brain is still stuck on this Super Bowl-sized revelation. You're ready to visit all the big corporations running lousy ads for your consumption. You're ready to tell them their television and radio and billboard and even social media ads are driving you crazy, and most definitely not getting you to buy.

They're boring. They all look the same. They make you run for the remote. They piss you off because they get in the way of the content you really want. They aren't anything at all like the Super Bowl ads you saw earlier this evening.

It doesn't matter which media you tune into. It's all the same look-alike, sound-alike blather. You've heard something about the importance of mixing the media, but you realize these ads suck no

matter what the platform.

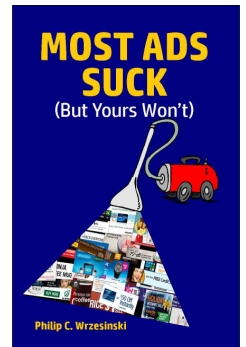
Then it dawns on you. Another revelation. You scribble it down on the notepad you keep on your nightstand. This will be good when you visit their boardroom.

**The message is more important than the media.**

How many times have you heard pundits debate which media is best for advertisers? The young Millennials are all on their phones, so mobile is hot right now. A few years ago everyone said you had to be on Facebook. That's where all the money is. Prior to that, everyone was building websites. Billboards, you read, reach more people per dollar than all the other media. Yet, right now, as you stop to think about it, the only billboards you can remember seeing in the last several weeks came from that posting online of *"Twenty Billboards You'll Never Believe Went Up."*

You start to laugh. *"Am I really that immune to advertising?"* No. You realize if someone put up a billboard worthy of being shared on the Internet, you would notice. But no one in your area comes close to that kind of creativity.

It isn't just the big corporations. None of the local companies run anything memorable or shareworthy either. In fact, most of the local ads





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dominating your airwaves, digital landscape, or sides of the road look, sound, and act like the worst of all the big national corporation ads, but with lower production values. It is almost as if the local companies are just trying to see if they can make even less effective ads than everyone else.

The message from most of those companies is the same. *"We don't know what we're doing but we saw a big company run an ad like this so we copied them."*

You know why they do it. You've been approached by the advertising salesperson from your local radio station. He shows up in a suit and tie and asks you the one question they all ask.

*"Who are you trying to reach?"*

You've learned that it doesn't matter what demographic you choose. He has a chart that shows you he reaches exactly your target market. He has diagrams of his coverage area. He has statistics to show how much those people spend in your market. He has graphs that show you where your money is going to go. He has spent a lifetime figuring out how to sell you on the fact he reaches the people you want to reach, but not a single moment on how to reach them in way that makes them want to act.

You recognize that every single advertising salesperson in every single media spent their entire pitch selling you that they had the

right audience. Not one of them, however, worked with you on coming up with the right thing to say to that audience. Instead they sent over a canned advertisement with someone else's voice that sounded like every other ad you've ever heard. Like sheep, they figured if everyone else was running ads like that, you should, too.

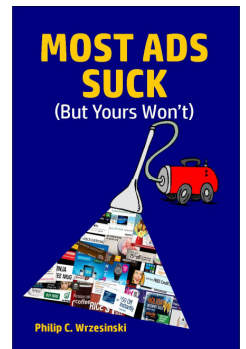
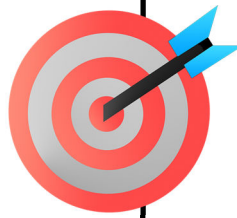
You chuckled once again remembering that ad that made you laugh the other day. It was your lunch hour and you were in the employee lounge where one of your staff had the local sports talk show on the radio. A woman came on and said, *"Hey guys! Tired of hearing your wife complain about her bra not fitting?"* That made you laugh out loud. Every married guy is tired of hearing that. You and your spouse had a good laugh that night talking about the bra company advertising on sports talk radio.

That woman had it right.

It isn't the media. It is the message.

She wasn't worried about reaching other women ages 35 to 65. She wasn't thinking about the education level of her audience, or average household income. She wanted to talk to one of the biggest influencers in her target audience's life about a real problem that affects a lot of people.

She knew something you are only beginning to



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understand. Not everyone makes a decision in a bubble or a vacuum. Women ages 35 to 65 know other women outside those ages. They interact with men, too. They hang out with people more educated than them and less educated than them. They have friends and family in both higher and lower income brackets.

All those demographics your advertising salesperson was trying to sell you meant nothing if you didn't say the right thing. If you didn't say something worth being heard, no demographic was going to hear it. If you didn't show something eye-catching and interesting, no demographic was going to watch it. If you didn't make your billboard memorable, no demographic was going to notice it. If you didn't type something shareworthy on Facebook, even your own fans weren't going to share it.

Now you really feel ready to tackle that boardroom. You have two revelations every advertiser needs to hear.

- Most Ads Suck
- The Message Is More Important Than the Media

If only you knew how to make ads less sucky. You decide to sleep on that thought.

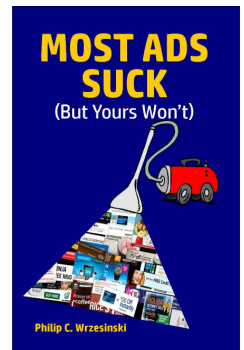


## Chapter 3 – Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad

*"If you want to waste a lot of money on advertising, just target exactly the right audience and then make an offer that fails to move them."* – Roy H. Williams

The alarm clock startles you awake. Maybe three hours of sleep? Your brain still won't let go of your new revelations on advertising. As you get dressed for the day, you make a mental note to pay closer attention to the billboards along the drive to work. You're also going to listen intently to the ads on your favorite radio station. You're going to try to figure out what they are doing wrong and how to make them better.

The music winds down and two voices you recognize start talking in a phony conversation, one you know would never happen in real life. Before they even get to the punch line your mind has already wandered, thinking about how many ads are using those same voices. Before you realize it, another ad, this time with only the male voice, is droning on over a loud backbeat about some biggest sale ever, just like they did last week. You laugh at that gimmick, wondering if anyone even cares. Pretty soon the whole advertising block is over and you can't remember a single company, just that they all sounded exactly like all the other ads you've ever heard.



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None of them could hold your attention for more than a few seconds. None of them said anything interesting or memorable. You started thinking: if you really are bombarded with 5,000-plus advertising messages a day, your brain must be hard-wired to ignore them all. Otherwise you would have to remember some of them, wouldn't you? Even if you aim a fire hose at a teacup, there still is bound to be some water in that teacup at the end.

Once again you start rubbing the back of your neck, wondering if it could really be that simple. *"Could it be,"* you ask, *"that our brains are wired to filter out anything that looks or sounds like an ad? Could it be that we immediately shut down and turn our focus elsewhere when a regular, boring ad comes on the air?"*

You remember the groans that came up at the Super Bowl party when the local ad blocks ran. Those who were actually interested in the game finally got a bathroom break. Even though you know the local Ford dealer personally, you still ignored his ad and used the time to critique Ford's national ads.

You get out of your car at work and hastily write your thought down on a piece of scrap paper.

## Principle #1: Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad

The best ads from your Super Bowl party didn't look or sound

like anything you had seen before. They were interesting, said interesting things, and had interesting images. You liked the ones that surprised you. You liked the ones that moved you. You hated the ones that pitched you. You looked away from the ones that were just as phony as the usual fare the rest of the year.

You ask yourself, *"Why don't companies write creative ads the rest of the year?"*

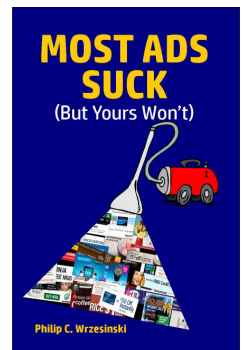
You start thinking about all the auto ads you've ever seen. A vehicle on a mountain road, or doing donuts in the desert, or simply driving with a scenic background followed by a sales pitch of \$299 down, \$299 a month. How many car companies have run a variation

on that ad? All of them, you guess. And all of them have the same small print about professional drivers on closed circuits. Gee, even if you buy their car, you don't get to enjoy it the way the commercial portrays that you should.

Same thing with the drug ads. A few seconds of flowers, swimming pools, and active, happy lives, followed by enough disclaimers on the

side effects that make you think you'd rather die because it would be more humane than taking a drug that you still aren't sure what it fixes.

And if you hear the words *"mouth-watering"* about some cheap restaurant chain one more





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time, you fear you might throw something at your TV screen. The steaks you order from those places never look quite the same as what they show you. In fact none of the food ever looks like the ad. Yet all the restaurant ads show you staged food and people having fun, laughing while dining. All. Of. Them.

There hasn't been a restaurant ad that made you interested in visiting since Wendy's ran the Where's the Beef? campaign back in the late 1980s. They all look the same and you ignore each and every one. Oh sure, the Taco Bell Chihuahua was funny, but that didn't get you to make a run for the border.

You're adding a third item to your list for the stuff you want to tell all these companies.

- Most Ads Suck
- The Message Is More Important Than the Media
- Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad



## Chapter 4 – Make Only One Point

*"Use half as many words and you'll hit twice as hard."* – Roy H. Williams

You finally get to your business. You sit down at your desk and open up your email with the overflowing inbox. You don't know whether it is the lack of sleep or your Super Bowl revelations, but

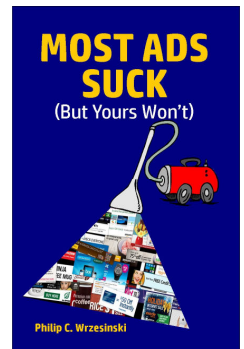
you can't seem to focus on anything at work. Instead you're looking up when that Wendy's Where's the Beef? commercial ran. Wikipedia tells you Clara Peller made that line famous in 1984, Wendy's abandoned it in 1985 and DJ Coyote McCloud wrote a hit song using that phrase.

What made that ad so memorable? Was it funny? Of course. The first time you saw it you laughed out loud, and no one was in the room with you. You couldn't wait to show it to someone else. There was no Internet so you had to wait for it to come on again. Here you were, back in 1984, hoping to actually see an ad because it was funny.

But what made it work wasn't just the humor. You've seen plenty of funny ads before and since then. In fact, a subcategory of your Super Bowl party was which ad you thought was the funniest. There have been a lot of funny ads that never moved you closer to the product like this one did. All of the Bud Lite ads cracked you up but never got you to crack a bottle of their beer. In fact, you can remember some really funny ads without remembering the company. Was it Cheetos or Doritos that had that finger-licking ad?

There has to be something else.

You go back to your three points for the



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boardroom. Point number two says the message is more important than the media. You ask yourself, what is the message of this ad?

Wendy's patties are bigger than their competitors.

That's it. Nothing more, nothing less. One simple point. They didn't talk about their fresh, never frozen meats. They didn't talk about their fries or anything else on the menu. They only made one point—that their hamburger was bigger than their competitors' hamburgers.

There is an elegance to making only one point. You start thinking back to the radio ad you heard this morning from the local Buick dealer. He seemed to be talking about new model cars, but then he brought up something about his service team and mentioned used vehicles, too. And there was something else he said that you remember chuckling about, but now you can't recall it. If you had to guess, there were at least five points in that ad and even though you were paying attention, you could only vaguely remember three of them, and not exactly what they were, just that there were three or more things they were trying to say.

You've made that same mistake yourself. You remember when the TV salesperson wanted to sell you some 10-second spots and you laughed him out of your office saying there was no way you could get everything across about your business in ten seconds. You

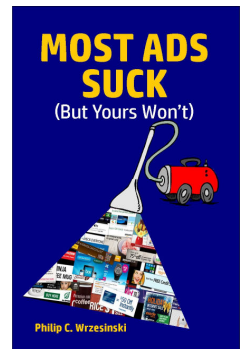
needed all sixty seconds the radio guy was offering. You had to talk about your staff and your services and your vision and your mission and your length in business and your location and your ...

Wait. What if you had it all wrong? You're almost embarrassed to admit it. You suddenly realize your own mistakes in advertising. You've tried to say so much in each ad that you wonder if anyone remembers anything at all. You figure at best a non-interested person hearing or seeing an ad could only remember one thing well.

Wendy's only told you one thing. It was the only thing you needed to know. It was the biggest, most important thing. They didn't clutter it with other information. They didn't dilute it with other points. They simply made just one point. And you remember it over thirty years later!

## Principle #2: Make Only One Point

Yes! It's all coming back to you. There was that speaker you saw a couple years ago at a local chamber event that had that story with the frying pan. You swore you'd never forget that story or his point. Your brain recalls the story instantly. You see him standing in the front of a room waving a frying pan and how startled you were. You replay his story in your head.



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A large company wasn't getting the results they wanted out of their advertising. The company sequesters its marketing team away for the day to come up with a new campaign. After hours of deliberation and debate, the team finally comes up with the twelve most important talking points for the new campaign.

They call in the copywriter.

The team leader starts explaining to the copywriter all the points they need made.

*"Point number one, blah, blah, blah. Point number two, blah, blah, blah ..."*

At this moment the team leader looks up to see the copywriter sitting there doing nothing.

*"Aren't you going to take any notes?"*

Silently, the copywriter reaches into a large bag by his feet and pulls out a board with twelve shiny nails sticking straight up out of the board. He lays it down on the table, nails pointing upward. He then takes out a frying pan and slams it down on the bed of nails. The whole room echoes with the sound as the advertising team all jumps backwards. The copywriter then holds up the pan so everyone can see the pattern of indents from the nails on the bottom of the pan.



The copywriter then pulls out another board. This one has one solitary spike on it. He places it on the table and slams the frying pan down onto this board. The spike impales the pan instantly. The pan goes down flush, stuck to the board.

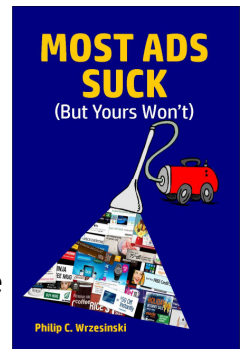
The copywriter looks up at the startled crowd and asks, *"How many points do you want me to make?"*

You swore you'd never forget that story. You can even recall how you jumped when the speaker slammed his frying pan down on the nails.

One point. That's all anyone is going to remember. Make one big, strong, not-watered-down point that sticks flush to the board.

Yeah, you start thinking, even some of the ads that only make one point then crowd that point with a whole bunch of filler to use up the rest of their ad space. They all have to tell you where they are, as if you couldn't find them if you wanted their product.

You know Big Al is down on the corner of Third and Sewer. He tells you that several times every day on your radio. You have no idea what Big Al does, but at least you know where to find him. Wouldn't it be better for Big Al if you knew what he did and wanted his services more than knowing



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where he was? Wouldn't you be able to pull out your phone and look him up if you really wanted what he was selling?

The coffee has settled in now and you know you need to get to work on your plans for Friday's staff meeting. Time to put your advertising thoughts away. Your list of things you want to tell these big companies about how to improve their advertising is growing.

- Most Ads Suck
- The Message Is More Important Than the Media.
- Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad
- Make Only One Point

## Chapter 5 – Tell a Story

*"Gurganus is right. The truth happens to everyone, but stories only happen to people who can tell them."* – Roy H. Williams

Your best friend texts you, knowing you were up late the night before for the Super Bowl party.

*"We still getting lunch?"*

*"Yep"*

*"Usual place?"*

*"OMW"*

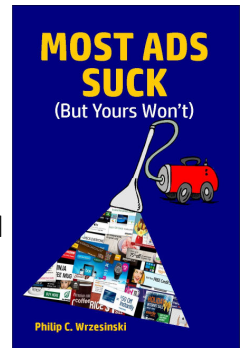
Just like everyone else, the first words out of your friend's mouth are, *"So which was your favorite ad?"*

You don't even get to the table. Your mind is racing. Do you tell your friend what you've discovered in the last twelve hours? Do you explain how you can't focus on anything else? Or do you give the quick answer while you're still letting your thoughts settle?

*"I liked the Kia ad with Melissa McCarthy,"* you blurt out. It wasn't your favorite, but everyone agreed that ad and the Skittles ad were the funniest that actually tied back to the products. They were funny stories used to make a point. Funny stories used to make just one single point.



They were also the first ones that popped into your mind. In fact, all the ads that you remembered best were stories. The one about the immigrant who goes on to make Budweiser beer. The one about the Mexican mother and daughter crossing the border that left you hanging because their website crashed. The Audi commercial that hit you in the feels thinking about your own daughter. They were all stories with a narrative. They were all thirty- and sixty-second plots.



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You spend the rest of your lunch hour laughing with your friend about the good, the bad, and the ugly from the night before while part of your mind wanders off in search of the story. All the good ads told one.

After lunch you decide you aren't going to be productive in the usual sense. You have research to do. What is it about stories that make them so much more memorable than facts and figures?

You sit down at your desk, open up Google and immediately stumble across Jonathan Gottschall, author of *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Gottschall tells you, *"Stories powerfully hook and hold human attention because, at a brain level, whatever is happening in a story is happening to us and not just them."* (10-16-2013, [www.fastcocreate.com](http://www.fastcocreate.com))

You find Rachel Gillett's article from 2014 where she says, *"When we read a story, not only do the language parts of our brains light up, but any other part of the brain that we would use if we were actually experiencing what we're reading about becomes activated as well."* (6-4-2014 [www.fastcompany.com](http://www.fastcompany.com))

You find Pamela B. Rutledge, Ph.D., M.B.A. writing for Positively Media, *"Stories are how we are wired. Stories take place in the imagination. To the human brain, imagined experiences are processed the same as real experiences. Stories create genuine*

*emotions, presence (the sense of being somewhere), and behavioral responses."* (1-16-2011 [www.psychologytoday.com](http://www.psychologytoday.com))

You read Catrinel Bartolomeu's article and are blown away by the line, *"Unlike statistics, stories trigger emotions—actual physical and chemical changes in our body."* (11-10-16 [www.contently.com](http://www.contently.com))

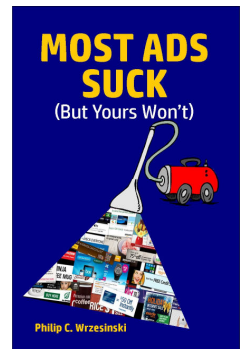
Stories trigger actual physical changes. Stories happen to us while they are being told to us. For ads, stories activate parts of the brain that would otherwise ignore those ads. Stories are a must if you want your ad to be remembered.

At least, you think as you add this to your list, most of the big companies get this one right.

## Principle #3: Tell a Story

One of the few auto ads that you can remember was that Dodge Charger ad with George Washington leading the Continental Army against the British from the front seat of his Charger. You also remember Eminem and Chrysler and the feeling Detroit was getting back on its feet. Stories.

Budweiser has been using the Clydesdales to tell stories for decades. That puppy ad gave you goose pimples. Coca-Cola has done the same. You





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can still sing that feel-good song they used back in the seventies. Stories.

You figure you probably don't need to tell the big guys about this principle, but you're putting it on your list nonetheless.

- Most Ads Suck
- The Message Is More Important Than the Media
- Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad
- Make Only One Point
- Tell a Story

## Chapter 6 – Speak to the Heart

*"Before you can take people where you want them to go, you have to meet them where they are."* – Roy H. Williams

The workday is done, but not really. Your workday never seems to end. Owning your own business gives you a lot of freedom to make your own rules and decisions, but it also weighs you down because your business never leaves your mind. Whether you're in the building or not, your business is always open in your mind.

Today you weren't as productive as you could have been. Part of you wants to blame it on the Super Bowl running so late. Overtime? How many of those games go into overtime? But you know the truth. You've been distracted by these new revelations about

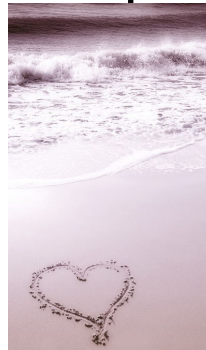
advertising all day long. You start your drive home, justifying your actions in your mind.

You think, *"This will be useful for my own ads."*

You think, *"This was research into the minds of our customers."*

You think, *"I'm onto something and this thread could be the most important thread I pull this year."*

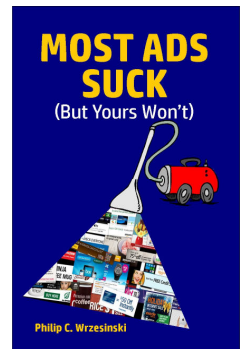
You think, *"Because this applies to my business, I'm working on my business instead of in my business today."*



Yeah, you're using logic to justify what your heart wanted to do. Isn't that always the truth? Even in your own business you sell to the heart. You sell on the emotion.

It isn't that you're selling something they don't need. You just know that a decision made by the heart is far stronger than one made by the mind.

Every big decision you have made in your own life was decided by your heart. You fell in love with your spouse. You fell in love with your house. You created a business so that you could get paid doing what you love.



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Sure, facts are important, you remind yourself. Without them, you couldn't sell the more expensive products and services. At the end of the day, however, facts are only the justification. The heart pulls out the wallet.

Of all the ads from last night's game, the one you can't get out of your head is Audi. You have a young daughter. The narration spoke to your heart. It could have been you narrating that ad. Politics aside, you connected and felt something. You always thought you'd own a Mercedes someday. But now Audi is on the radar.

The feeling was similar to that old Budweiser commercial you remembered earlier when all the people in the airport started clapping and applauding the soldiers walking through the terminal. Some people mocked that ad, saying it had nothing to do with drinking beer and was just a sentimental ploy. You knew the truth. It hit you right in the feels. You raised your own glass to toast those soldiers when that commercial played.

Your mind starts racing again, knowing you are onto something. Emotions play a role in making ads more effective. Tugging at the heartstrings worked on you. You're sure it works on others. You wonder if the Beatles were right after all. All you need is love. You try to reconcile this with the ads you've seen lately.

Yes, Love is powerful. But it isn't the only emotion you

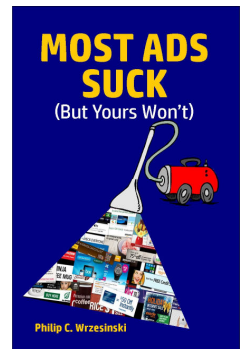
remember from last night. The Skittles ad made you laugh. Laughter is the emotion of Joy. Love and Joy. "What else?" you ponder.

You remember somewhere somebody told you the opposite of Love isn't Hate or Anger, it is Indifference. Isn't that the truth? In advertising, you tell yourself, Indifference is probably the worst thing of all. You need to make people feel something, anything.

Yes, even Anger. Anger is a powerful emotion. So is Fear. You start slowly shaking your head, grinning, as it all becomes clear to you. This whole political season was all about Anger and Fear. Both campaigns ran on Anger and Fear. They used powerful emotions to get people to act.

Just then the car behind you honks its horn, startling you. You want to be angry, but instead you laugh. You're so lost in thought over this new concept you didn't realize the light had changed.

As you accelerate through the intersection you recognize your new revelations are consuming you. You make a promise to yourself that when you get home, you'll put this aside until at least after dinner. But for now, you're ready to call it.



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## Principle #4: Speak to the Heart

Love and Joy (laughter) and Gratitude and Hope and Anger and Fear. Strong emotions that can set your advertising apart from the rest. Especially Hope. The Audi ad still playing in your mind was, on the surface, about equality and fairness and empowerment, but you realize those are all subsets of Hope. The ad triggered your love of your daughter and hope for her future.

If you can make somebody feel something, they are more likely to remember your ad. You figure most companies would choose Love or Happiness or Hope. It isn't like a political campaign where Anger or Fear can get you to vote against something.

You're just about to wrap up this thought, but something is nagging at the back of your mind. You think to yourself, *"If I didn't have a daughter, would that Audi ad have hit me as hard as it did?"*

You voted it your favorite, but not everyone did. One guy ranked it in his bottom five, saying he was tired of hearing, *"the same liberal, political crap in advertising."*

*"It's damn near as bad as the Oscars,"* he grumbled.

You pull into the drive. After dinner you promise yourself you'll look into that a little more closely. As you put the car in park, you go over your list in your head one more time.



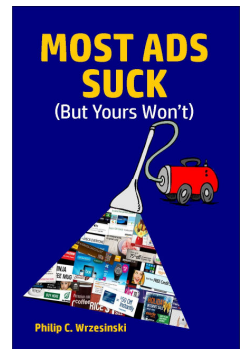
- Most Ads Suck
- The Message Is More Important Than the Media
- Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad
- Make Only One Point
- Tell a Story
- Speak to the Heart

## Chapter 7 – Speak to Your Tribe

*"Ads that change hearts and minds say, 'This belief is why we wake up in the morning. It's why we come together. Here's how we live out our belief. Do you believe what we believe?'"* – Roy H. Williams

You kept your promise. You took a break from thinking about advertising all through dinner. To do so, however, you found you had to focus all your energy on your spouse. You asked questions, listened closely, smiled a lot. As hard as it was, you steered the conversation away from yourself at every chance.

Isn't that everyone's favorite subject? Themselves? You know you could drone on for hours given the opportunity. Tonight you were hoping your spouse wouldn't ask because you knew you had more to say than a pot roast and mashed redskins could handle.



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After dinner you go open your laptop. There was a thread you saw online earlier in the day with some guy who was called The Wizard of Ads. You promised yourself you would look him up when you had more time.

Roy H. Williams in Austin, Texas got the name The Wizard of Ads from one of his clients and used that name as the title of his trilogy of best-selling business books. You find the quote that brings your earlier question about emotions to nest.

*"The risk of insult is the price of clarity."* Roy H. Williams, The Wizard of Ads, Chapter 1.

You read that to mean the more clear you are with your message, the more likely some people will have strong feelings towards it and others will have strong feelings against it. No one had left the Audi ad off their list. It was either top five or bottom five. That's clarity.

Even the election, you realize, was more about appealing to one set of people, even if it angered everyone else. Both sides were using emotion to rile up their tribes. They were using Anger and Fear to reach the hearts of people who thought like they did, believed as they believed.

You ponder this further. Using emotion reaches the hearts of people. The people most likely to be persuaded by your emotional

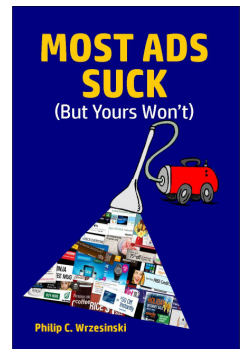
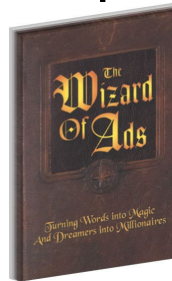
pitch, however, are those who already have something in common with you. Everyone else will be insulted. Ignore those folks and focus on those who share your values, who share your beliefs.

That's the word you wanted. Beliefs! People who believe the same things you do will always be your most loyal customers. You already know that. When you use emotions in advertising, you figure you should use emotions that also align with your company values in the first place. You're really speaking your beliefs. Those who share your beliefs will perk up and listen.

That, you figure, is why some of the emotional ads did nothing for you. They were speaking to a different belief than yours, a different value.

You start rethinking your earlier thought about speaking to the heart. Love and Joy and Hope are still powerful emotions that reach the heart. But you have to figure out which hearts to reach with those emotions. You want to reach the people who share your belief system, who share your core values.

You start thumbing through a file you keep of all the workshops you've attended. You remember one you went to years ago that had an exercise to help you uncover your own core values. You find the yellow sheets stapled together.



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There on page 2 you had circled the words Freedom, Curiosity, Diligence, and Education. Those are your Core Values, your personal traits. That is what drives you to do what you do. It is also what drives your business. Your business shares those traits with you.

Freedom because you're the business that helps others help themselves and to give them their freedom.

Curiosity because you're the business that is always looking for a better, newer, more advanced way to do what you already do well.

Diligence because you won't stop until a problem is solved and solved the right way. Your staff sometimes calls it tenacity, because they know once you set your mind to something, you see that it gets done.

Education because you're always learning and you're always teaching. Your business hosts more how-to classes than all your competitors combined, yet you, yourself spend more time attending classes and workshops than any other entrepreneur you know. There is always something new to be learned.

Your tribe, your most fiercely loyal customers, share those traits. You have to speak to their hearts using emotions, but you have to also do it in their language of Freedom, Curiosity, Diligence and Education.

Like Roy said, when you do that with clarity you may insult someone else, but your tribe will respond. You add this to your list.

## Principle #5: Speak to Your Tribe

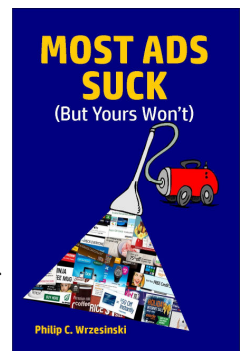
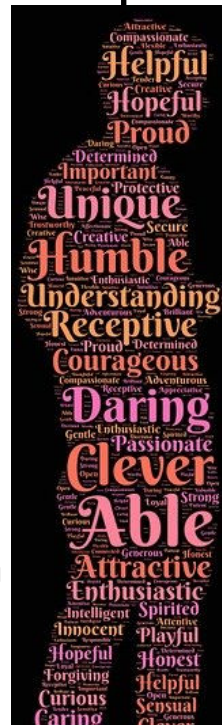
Something in the back of your mind clicks. You remember a TEDx talk by Simon Sinek you and few million of your friends saw. You pull it up online and start watching. There! At the 5:36 mark is exactly what you are looking for.

*"The goal is not to do business with everybody who needs what you have. The goal is to do business with people who believe what you believe."* (Simon Sinek, Start With Why, TEDx Puget Sound)

Your tribe is people who believe what you believe. Your tribe is people who share your values. Your tribe is people most likely to be moved positively by your emotional appeal.

Like all the other principles, you look at this principle as one that fits in well with the others. Make only one point, but make it one that tells a story of Love or Joy or Hope about Freedom, Curiosity, or Diligence.

Do that and you'll have the winning formula for ads that move the needle and get results.





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At the end of the day, you realize, the true goal of your advertising is to get people to think of you first when they need your product or service. The people who already think like you do, who share your beliefs and values, are the low-hanging fruit out there waiting for you to speak to them.

Your list is growing.

- Most Ads Suck
- The Message Is More Important Than the Media
- Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad
- Make Only One Point
- Tell a Story
- Speak to the Heart
- Speak to Your Tribe



## Chapter 8 – Make Your Customer the Star

*“Bad advertising is about you and your product. Good advertising is about your customer and their life.”* – Roy H. Williams

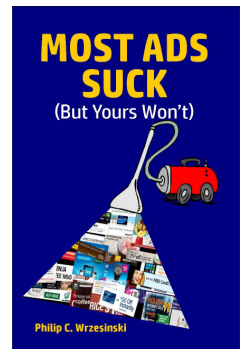
After watching Simon Sinek, you start wandering all over the net. You read some of the quotes from Roy H. Williams. You pop over to Seth Godin's blog and scroll down through a few posts. You head back to TED.com and watch a few more videos that catch your eye. One thought flickers in your mind. *“What if every company, instead of writing an ad, had to write a one-minute TED presentation?”* You

chuckle at the thought. It would certainly make advertising more interesting. One big idea crunched down into 60-seconds.

As you're surfing, you remember your discussion with your spouse at dinner about diamond rings. As if on cue, you see a story about De Beers and their iconic phrase, *“A Diamond is Forever.”* Frances Gerety wrote that line for De Beers as part of the ad agency N. W. Ayers back in 1947 and it transformed the engagement ring industry forever. In 1999 Advertising Age proclaimed it the *“Slogan of the century.”*

You start watching those *“Shadow”* ads De Beers ran in the 1990s and a wave of nostalgia washes over you. You remember those ads. The silhouettes and shadows against the wall with the iconic music in the background, all leading up to a crescendo showing a real diamond on a shadow hand and the iconic phrase *“A Diamond is Forever.”* No narration, only music and a few words on the screen. No actors either. Just shadows. You saw your mom and dad in those black & white ads. Heck, you saw yourself in those ads.

Saw. Yourself. You say it slowly. At dinner earlier you had to do everything you could to not talk about yourself. One of the Roy H. Williams quotes you read earlier said, *“The most irresistible word in the English language is a three-letter word, and it doesn't contain an X.”* The word he was referring



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to was “you.”

You remember that exercise your web designer had you do when you were writing new content for your website. He had you take that content to a website where you ran it through a “We-We Calculator” to see how many times you used the words “you” or “your” versus talking about “we,” “us” or the company name. You immediately start searching for the calculator.

You find it under a new name: the Customer Focus Calculator created by best-selling authors and web-conversion geniuses Bryan and Jeffrey Eisenberg. The calculator works by simply typing in a web page URL and your company name and it tells you how much you focus on yourself and how much your content focuses on the customer. The ideal is that you should talk about the customer three to four times as much as you talk about yourself.

Make your customer the star. It works for web content. Why not for advertising? You immediately go back to the *Forbes* article you saw on the most iconic ad campaigns of all time (Jennifer Rooney, May 11, 2016 [www.forbes.com](http://www.forbes.com)) and you find these:

- Apple – Think Different
- American Express – Don't Leave Home Without It
- McDonald's – You Deserve a Break Today
- AT&T – Reach Out and Touch Someone



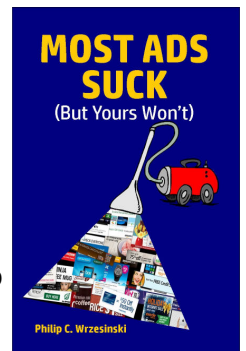
- Budweiser – This Bud's For You
- Nike – Just Do It

Only a couple had the actual word *you* in them, but they all were directions for *you*. They were all about *you* doing something. They were customer-focused instead of product or company-focused.

A couple more recent commercials pop into your mind. Dove ran the “*You're More Beautiful Than You Think*” campaign that literally made the customers the stars. And then there was that guy in the Old Spice commercial telling women to, “*Look at your man.*” These were great stories making only one emotional point about something they believed in that spoke directly to you.

You, you, you. It was and is *always* about you. You laugh at the thought once again. How simple. It was there when you wrote your content for your website. It should be there when you write your content for your email newsletters, your social media posts, and your advertising. You're almost ready to call it another principle when something stops you dead in your tracks.

Not one single ad from your list of favorites at the Super Bowl made the customer the star. Not the Skittles ad, nor the Kia ad with Melissa McCarthy, nor even the Audi ad put *you* as the center of attention or asked *you* to do something.



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You even checked some online lists of all-time favorite Super Bowl ads and none of them were customer-centric. Not Michael Jordan and Larry Bird playing H-O-R-S-E for McDonald's. Not Mean Joe Greene drinking a Coke. Not the Cindy Crawford New Pepsi Can ad. Not even Wendy's Where's the Beef? was customer-centric.

You start to turn away from this thought but you can't. You don't want to give up on it quite yet. You've realized through this whole revelation that you're no longer worried about talking to the big companies about their Super Bowl ads. This stuff is too good for them. If their ad agencies can't figure this out for themselves, they shouldn't be in the advertising business.

You've already decided this information is for you and your fellow small businesses, retailers, service agencies, and manufacturers who cannot afford Madison Avenue agencies and are forced to rely on scripts written by untrained salespeople. You are taking these lessons to your fellow entrepreneurs. You're sharing these ideas with your local advertising media to help them create better stuff.

Your fellow small businesses can't afford Michael and Larry or Cindy or Melissa or Beyoncé. Your fellow small businesses aren't going to bombard the airwaves, overload the print media, and saturate the landscape with their messages. Your local businesses aren't winning customers by browbeating the masses. They are

winning customers one at a time. You look back at Jennifer Rooney's article on the most iconic campaigns. They spoke directly to the customer. That's good enough for you. You're making the call.

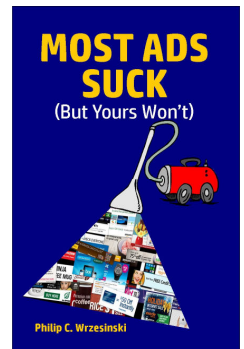
## Principle #6: Make Your Customer the Star

Going back to your first principle—don't look or sound like an ad—you figure this last principle is one of the easiest ways to avoid the mistake of the first one. None of the other local businesses are making the customer the star. None of the usual fluff you see or hear, the kind that makes you turn the channel, is about "you." Just this one step alone will make your advertising much more compelling and interesting.

Isn't that the goal? At the end of the day, you're trying to get people to pay attention and remember you so that when the time comes for your services, you will be the first name that pops into their heads. You will be the company they remember that shares their values and beliefs.

Making the ad about the customer gets their attention. Speaking to the heart gets them to feel. Telling a story gets them to remember. Speaking to the tribe gets them to act.

You look at your list one more time.



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- Most Ads Suck
- The Message Is More Important Than the Media
- Don't Look or Sound Like an Ad
- Make Only One Point
- Tell a Story
- Speak to the Heart
- Speak to Your Tribe
- Make Your Customer the Star

Two revelations and six principles to make your advertising more memorable and effective. You glance at your watch. 11:11pm. You crack a little smile and head to bed. Tomorrow you have a lot of writing to do if you're really going to spread this to the world.

## Chapter 9 - Samples

*"Ad writing is much easier to teach than ad strategy."* – Roy H. Williams

Whew! You made it. You've come to the light at the end of the tunnel. This is the chapter where I show you how to use all of these principles to create compelling content and copy that moves the needle.

I have asked several small business owners to submit some basic information to me for use in this book including who they are, their

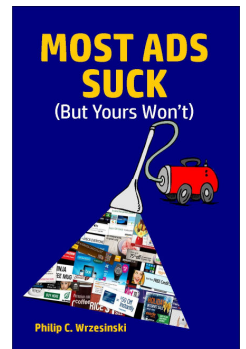
values, and what they are trying to accomplish. These are real companies and real ad content they can use (in some cases already are using) for their own advertising purposes.

In every case I will be writing content that takes thirty seconds to read out loud. Why thirty seconds? It isn't because I am a fan of radio advertising (I am, but that's another book in and of itself), but that a thirty-second script can be used for radio, TV, web content, email, and social media. About the only place it doesn't work is billboard advertising.

The other reason for writing content this length is that it gets you in the right frame of mind for keeping your content short and to the point. The interesting thing is that even at thirty seconds, you actually only get the first three or four seconds to grab your customer's attention.

Roy H. Williams talks about a part of our brain called Broca. Broca is the gatekeeper to the rest of the brain. If you want to get remembered, you have to first get past Broca. Broca doesn't like anything boring or expected. Broca doesn't like anything that sounds like a sales pitch. Broca is that filter we talked about back in Chapter 3.

It is and always will be about your opening line. Get that right and you've won their attention. Get



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that wrong and it doesn't matter what else you try to say. Interesting word combinations and powerful actions are the best way to get past Broca. I asked each company to send me three unrelated and interesting words you don't hear every day. I'm going to use those words to show you how you can be interesting, creative, tell a story, make only one point, speak to the heart about your values, and make your customer the star.

As you go through the next several pages, you'll read about the company, you'll read the content, and you'll read my notes about each ad. At the end I will include the ads I used in my own business that moved the needle and why they worked as well as they did.

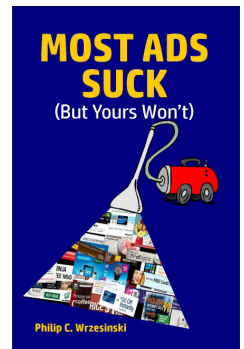
One important point: The content I am writing for each company is written solely to show you how to use the principles in this book. I only have a small glimpse into each company based on information they sent me and the assumptions I make about their business. I am not writing an ad campaign for them. A good advertising consultant would spend far more time uncovering the true you to make sure the content matches the experience. A great advertising consultant would create a full campaign that has its own characters and story arc and style. It would be instantly recognizable as you, and interesting enough to make people want to hear/read more.

One final note: You might get to the end of this chapter all fired up and then worry that you don't have the creativity to write content like this. Just remember that if you follow the principles

above, your content will be far more interesting than anything else out there, no matter what level of creativity you bring to the table. Sometimes it is the simpler ideas that work the best.

There are many ways to be creative in your writing. I used the "three-word trick"—asking each company to give me three unrelated, but interesting words to use in each ad—for most of the ads in the samples you will read. Another technique is to have someone write a single, outrageous sentence and then try to create thirty seconds of content about your business from that opening statement. You can even simply open a book to a random page, close your eyes, and place your finger on the page. Use that sentence to start your content. I guarantee your ad won't look or sound like any other ad out there. (Roy H. Williams had an ad-writing contest using that very technique while I was writing this book. I won a prize.) Whatever you do, don't be boring and don't sound like anyone else.

You don't have to like all the ads in this chapter. You might even take issue with some of the ads. That's okay. Remember that an ad's ability to attract is equal to its ability to repel. The true goal of each ad is to make the customers who share your core values believe that you are talking directly to them and that you made them feel something. Are you ready?





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## Business: BizMags (Becky Blanton)

(434) 207-3715

[www.beckyblanton.com](http://www.beckyblanton.com)

BizMags is a publishing company that writes, photographs, designs and prints hardcopy and digital magazines for businesses who want to give their customers a non-ad cluttered magazine with lots of photos and features. Sometimes part catalog, other times part photomontage, it redefines magazines and gives small and large business owners a unique way to tell their story. It's personal and simple and focused only on them.

**Message:** Everyone has a story and a history and it can be told best in the words and photos that convey who you are, what you do, and how your customers are most likely to see and relate to you.

**Values:** Generous, Inspiring, Relentless, Out-of-the-Box

**Words:** Bacon, Fishing, Chocolate

**My notes:** BizMags is selling Pride, Connection, Nostalgia, all elements of Joy. Making only one point is easy because Bizmags really only offers one service – telling your story. Yes, they have different ways of telling your story, but the true goal is to first convince someone that their story needs to be told.

## Fishing With Bacon

You ought to try fishing with bacon. No. Not at the lake. Fry up a pan of bacon and see who comes around. You also ought to try sharing

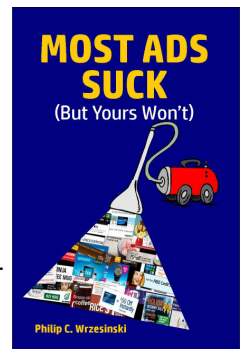
your company's story. Your story is the real reason people buy from you. Especially when you tell it right. BizMags is the storyteller for companies like yours. Your story will bring you the customers you need. When you're ready to tell your story, let BizMags tell it for you. It's like fishing with a plate of bacon, and a side of chocolate.

*(This is an anchoring ad. We relate telling your story to the smell of bacon and how it attracts people. We call this anchoring because we are relating something you sell to something already known. The word "bacon" is a great word for anchoring because it truly has an emotional connection with many people.)*

## Story of Perseverance

You've given it all and a plate of bacon to make your company succeed. From the idea you hatched while fishing to the hidden obstacles that tried to sink you, you never took your eye off the prize. Your product is great, but your story of perseverance is what your customers are really buying. That's why BizMags wants to write your story. We relate because we're as relentless as you. We'll do whatever it takes to tell your story the way you know it should be told. BizMags, when it's time to tell your story.

*(This ad is reaching out to the relentless entrepreneur, one of the values shared by Bizmags. There is a heavy emphasis on telling your story your*



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way. *The relentless entrepreneur did things his or her way and will continue to do things his or her way. That is what makes him or her relentless.*)

## Thinking Outside the Box

You put chocolate on your bacon. No one else thought of it. You did. You've always been one step ahead of the crowd. That's why people hire you. Your product is in their mind, but it's your story that moves their heart. BizMags knows this. That's why you hired BizMags. You know your story needs to be told in the same forward-thinking fashion. BizMags gets to the heart of the matter to tell your story your way. BizMags, when it's time to tell your story.

*(This ad is pointed toward the out-of-the-box thinkers, recognizing their visionary skills. Visionaries see things others don't. Visionaries already understand the power of storytelling and understand instinctively what Bizmags is there to do. They don't need to be convinced to tell their story. They just need to see themselves doing it. That's why I use the phrase, "That's why you hired BizMags." It cements in their mind the action I want them to take.)*

## The Story That Sells

It was the bacon. Woke you up out of the best sleep you had in months. You hoped for chocolate chip pancakes like you read in the magazine. You weren't disappointed. You read the story of this fishing cottage and knew it was the retreat you needed to focus on

your company. Their story spoke to your heart. That's it! You realize it's their story that got you here. It's your story that will get your company there. A little research tells you BizMags told their story. You're calling them today. BizMags, when it's time to tell your story.

*(This is a different approach in that it uses an already finished product to help convince someone why they need that product for their own use. It is a testimonial ad in a way. In fact, I would encourage BizMags to make a series of these ads using their previous clients as the "fishing cottage" and how BizMags telling of their story helped someone else utilize their services and also want to tell their own story.)*

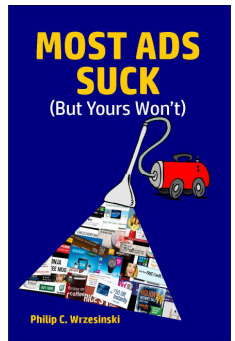
## Business: FCON21 – Internet Business Solutions (John Furst)

[info@fcon21.biz](mailto:info@fcon21.biz)

[www.fcon21.biz/email-pros](http://www.fcon21.biz/email-pros)

FCON21 - Internet Business Solutions is an ad agency which increases the bottom line of its customers by implementing a dynamic, multi-channel marketing system for them.

The ideal client has a permission based email list of 1,500+ customers (prospects will do in certain cases) and is spending at least \$ 5,000 a month on online advertising. The client must also have a great product or service that is not a commodity (B2C or B2B doesn't matter).



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**Message:** Effective email marketing is not just about sending out what was news last month or mailing discount coupons and free offers every once in a while. Only a few business do it right. Great email marketing is an opportunity to stand out. I will tell you how it's done.

**Values:** GENEROUS, thoughtful, loyal, kind, patient, brilliant

**Words:** Moon, Banana, Napkin

**My Notes:** This company presents a tricky challenge. Lots of companies are out there selling "social media" expertise. Internet Business Solutions needs to instead be selling Hope. They list GENEROUS as one of their main core values, but Generosity is best shown, not told. Generosity is something that earns you Word-of-Mouth when you do it without talking about it, so I purposefully avoided using it in their ads.

## Email is Hard

The metrics come in. Your email campaign offers the moon, but your customers refuse to throw the lasso. The experts all told you email was so easy a monkey could do it. But you're the one eating bananas. Your buddy gave you a name to look up. You pull the crumpled napkin out of your pocket. FCON21 Internet Business Solutions. You look them up. They are the only company telling you that while email is easy, getting results from email is hard. FCON21 promises to do the hard work for you. All you have to do is call.

*(This ad plays to the notion that doing email right is not as easy as you think. Smart people who check metrics and measure ROI know there is no silver bullet and are willing to listen to the person who admits as much. They want the company that is honest and tells the downside. They don't like to feel like a fool.)*

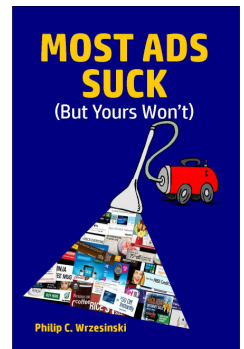
## Changing Agencies

You love your ad agency. You've been to the moon and back with these guys. You wouldn't even consider changing if your current results weren't driving you bananas. You know you need someone who knows as much about email as you do about your company. You won't make this change lightly. You need something more than a few notes scribbled on a napkin. You're choosing FCON21 Internet Business Solutions. They specialize in getting results from your email. Period. FCON21, when you want to do email right.

*(The companies described by Mr. Furst as the ideal companies for his business are likely already paying someone else to do this service. This ad deals with the loyalty issues of changing from the team they've always used. People who view loyalty as a strong core value don't change easily. They need a strong reason to justify the change.)*

## Asking Crazy Questions

If a monkey ate bananas on the moon, would he



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need a napkin? That's about as crazy as asking, "What is the best discount to offer to get my emails opened?" You're smart enough to know that email is far more than just discounts and coupons. You're also smart enough to find someone to help you ask the right questions about email. That someone is FCON21 Internet Business Solutions. You want results. Internet Business Solutions answers your questions to get you those results. Yes, the monkey needs a napkin to clean out the inside of his space helmet. Yes, you need FCON21.

*(Another ad aimed at smart people. This ad uses something absurd as the opening line to get people's attention, then focuses on asking the right questions about your email campaign – and getting the answers.)*

## Business: The Write Word Writing and Editing Services (Tom Bentley)

[bentguy@charter.net](mailto:bentguy@charter.net)

Need your story told with a persuasive slant? The Write Word will supply just the right words to engage your audience, and impel them to think, to agree, and to act. From the full range of marketing collateral to writing and editing book-length documents, you can rely on The Write Word to get your message straight, slanted—and even stirring.

**Message:** Meaning and understanding can be conveyed—or mangled—by the skillful or stilted use of words. I want to work with

people who know that good stories make for good connections.

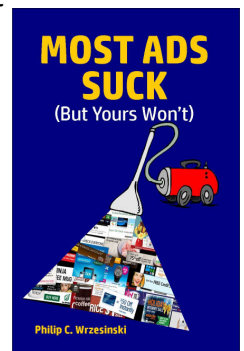
**Values:** Amusing (as in "could he also be dangerous?"), Tidy (as in mild OCD), Grouchy (until after his 5pm cocktail), Left-handed (excepting with scissors)

**Words:** Flummoxed, Distillation, Prestidigitation

**My Notes:** First, let me say that I know Tom Bentley. I am familiar with his writings. I used him as the editor for this book, so I also know his services. His company presents a challenge for spoken word advertising because of the homonym in the title of his company. Plus the length of the name is cumbersome and sometimes, for brevity's sake and for flow of words, I shortened it by leaving off the second half. As for core values, those were more difficult to portray, but his choice of lengthy words to challenge my creativity actually fits in perfect with what he offers.

## Finding the Right Editor

You liked the word prestidigitation. Your friends did not. You'll see what the editor thinks. Once you find an editor that can handle your style. Someone who can distill your prose without watering down your aromatic phrases. You're calling The Write Word Writing and Editing Services. Tom Bentley doesn't get flummoxed by the fifty-cent words. He can coax the flavor out of every passage. With a little sleight-of-hand, he'll ensure even your friends are



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drunk on your every word. Write Word Writing and Editing, your words enlightened.

*(Writers are an opinionated breed with strong feelings – often negative – toward their editors. They fear that editors will water down their works. That is why I used phrases like distilling aromatic phrases, coaxing flavor. These are comforting words to a writer looking for an editor that gets them. The use of big words is a tie-in to the core values of Amusing and Left-Handed.)*

## Developmental Editing

You used to be flummoxed, baffled, perplexed, flabbergasted, and all the other fifty-cent words you could think of. You knew the story was there, but you couldn't distill it down to its purest form. You called Tom at The Write Word for some developmental editing. With a little prestidigitation, he helped you find the elusive thread holding your project together. Now you're excited, enthusiastic, and fervent and a bunch of other words Tom knows. He helped you find your story. Write Word Writing and Editing, your words enlightened.

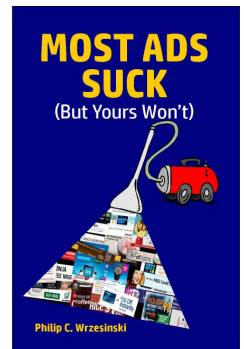
*(This ad is directed at the writer who needs help flushing out the story. The Write Word offers several services, but in our quest to make only one point, we have to focus on only one service. It makes it okay for you to use an editor for more than just grammatical services. Again, the use of big words is to make it more Amusing. The tagline "your words enlightened" is reassuring the writer that*

*Tom won't change your writing, only help you make your writing better.)*

## Your Favorite Whiskey

A good book is like your favorite whiskey. The words are the barley. Choose poorly and you'll flummox your readers before their first sip. Writing is the malting and mashing, the process of putting everything together. The distillation is when you call in the pro. The still master's talent turns wort into whiskey the way a talented editor turns your written words into gold. Tom Bentley of The Write Word Writing and Editing is the editor you call to coax the flavor out of your written word. He knows a little something about your favorite whiskey, too. Write Word Writing and Editing, your words distilled properly.

*(Comparison ads like this anchor the known to the unknown. In this case we use the steps for making whiskey to compare to the steps for writing a good book, placing the editor in the position of the pro you call for the final step in the process. When you can anchor your services to something already known, you make it far easier for people to understand why they need your services. This ad works with anyone who fancies himself as a Hemingway writer.)*





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## Business: Ausoma (Sue Canfield)

[sue@ausoma.com](mailto:sue@ausoma.com)

(715) 296-0347

Ausoma provides social media marketing for authors.

**Message:** To foster word of mouth with our existing clients and partners to make it easier for them to spread our message.

**Values:** Responsive, organized, creative, thorough

**Words:** Coffee, mountain, bike

**My Notes:** Ausoma is in the business of selling Time. Boil it down and the Time they are selling is really Hope. Hope for creating a platform through social media. Hope for growing a following. Hope for getting more sales without having to do all the selling. The challenge for this company is the name. It looks and sounds funny – for now. With powerful ad messages, it can become a household name. Just ask Etsy or eBay. Although the words they gave me aren't that interesting or thought-provoking, they do help paint strong mental images.

## The Theys

They tell you, you need a platform. You won't sell any books without one. Get on social media, they say. Build a following, they say. They, they, they. You sip your coffee. "They" aren't staring out your window at the mountain views wondering if you'll get your bike ride in today. You're already one step ahead of the "theys". You called Ausoma – Author Social Marketing. Ausoma handles it all, better

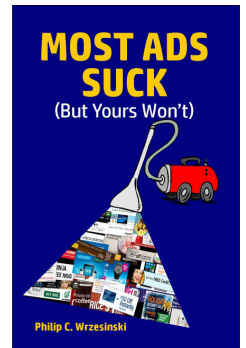
than you ever could. All your social media marketing and most of your online platform building, too. Next time you're telling the "theys" about Ausoma.

*(This ad is for the organized author, the one who plans ahead, and recognizes the choice of time versus money. You could either do your social media work yourself or go for a bike ride. Every author knows they need social media to grow their platform, but some would rather go ride a bike. The organized author already gets this and just needs to be shown making that decision. The organized author likes being "one step ahead".)*

## Meeting for Coffee

You meet your fellow writers for coffee. Your favorite spot facing the mountain. Your friends arrive. You talk as much about platform building as you do sentence structure. Such is the life of today's writer. Your friends head off to update Facebook and tweet something witty to their followers. You climb on your bike and chuckle. You hired Ausoma – Author Social Marketing to handle all your social media and online marketing. Your platform is growing while you're out riding. Maybe tomorrow you'll tell your friends about Ausoma.

*(Like the ad before it, this paints the time versus money picture. The story of writers gathering in a coffee house is a timeless image for authors.)*



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*Talking about platform-building, however, brings it to the present day. The other image in this ad is the final line, the I-know-a-secret, "Maybe tomorrow you'll tell your friends," line. Writers are generous, but they always hold back on their best ideas when talking with friends. Most authors will recognize this line as pointing out that Ausoma is one of their best ideas.)*

## Your Platform is Growing

You're no Tony Robbins with millions of followers on Twitter. Heck, you couldn't even hold his coal shovel. But your platform is growing. When you hired Ausoma – Author Social Marketing, they promised to handle your social media and online marketing. Their tweeting, posting, and promotion has grown your online reach 324% in just 6 months. Your platform is growing while you're out mountain biking. Your platform is growing while you meet your muse over coffee. Your platform is growing because you hired Ausoma to do what they do best so that you could do what you do best – write.

*(Many non-fiction writers use their books to help them get speaking engagements. Dropping a famous name like Tony Robbins panders to this crowd. Using celebrity names, however, can be dangerous. If you make any claim in any way that makes it seem they are endorsing what you do, you open yourself up to a likely lawsuit. Same goes with using their image. In fact, using their image without permission in print or digital is a no-no. Even if you use a benign statement like the one above, an image is equal to an endorsement.*

*This ad also uses a statistic. Statistics are tricky. The more exact the number, the more believable it is, but also the less smoothly it rolls off the tongue. I got the 324% from Ausoma from a real case study. If you use a number like that in a print or broadcast ad, you need something on your website to back it up. If you use it online, hyper-link it back to a case study. Specifics show the "responsiveness" and "thoroughness" in their core values.)*

## Business: Off the Wagon (Michelle Sahr)

**152 E. Main St.**

**Kent OH 44240**

**(330) 474-1330**

**[www.offthewagonshop.com](http://www.offthewagonshop.com)**

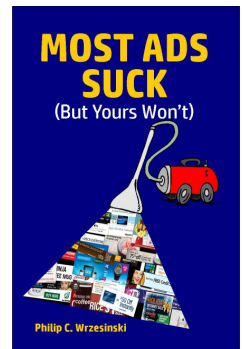
Our tagline is "Toys for the Young at Heart". We are in a college town so we appeal to both the young and old and everything in between. Lots of humorous gag gifts, games for all ages, gift items, comics, and, of course, toys.

**Message:** Stop in for a gift if you have a friend or a relative that doesn't need anything/ has everything including a great sense of humor. We have fun and funny gifts for all ages

**Values:** Busy, Community-Minded, Smart

**Words:** Unicorns, Star Wars, Bacon

**My Notes:** I have been to Off the Wagon. I also know a thing or two about toys, having owned a



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toy store myself for several decades. Off the Wagon is a stone's throw from Kent State University and is a great little store that sells more to the college crowd than to young children. Since most people expect toy stores to sell toys for young ones – and I knew using the word unicorn would appeal to all ages – I used these ads to focus on selling to older clientele, the ones who might not think about Off the Wagon. You will also see that I added the “Toys” to the end of their name to help clarify exactly what they do. Finally, the words they gave me – Unicorn, Star Wars, and Bacon – presented a unique challenge of trying to make only one point, but they certainly help paint a vivid image or two.

## Unicorn Flavored Bacon

Your friend sees unicorns. You're okay with that. As long as he doesn't take out his Star Wars light saber and make unicorn-flavored bacon. You know you won't find the perfect gift for him at any of the chain stores with the mass-produced-not-to-offend offerings. You're going local. You've seen unicorns yourself at Off the Wagon on Main Street. Heck, they probably have bacon-flavored Star Wars stuff, too. You're going local. Off the Wagon Toys for your friends who are... well... a little off their wagon.

*(This ad is an appeal to the people who think of shopping local in the first place anyway. The true message of this ad is that shopping local helps you find more unique gifts. Shopping at Off the Wagon helps you find stuff that your crazy unicorn-seeing friend would like. The*

*Shop Local message can either be about supporting the community, but that is selling guilt, or about the advantages of finding unique, more thoughtful gifts. Don't play the guilt card. It rarely works at all and never works long-term.)*

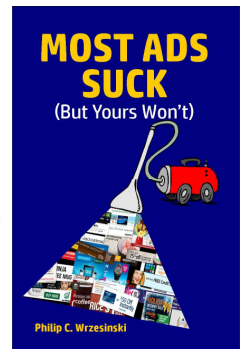
## Bad Joke

A man walks into a bar and screams, “I am a Sith Lord. Give me bacon or die.” The bartender quickly serves up a side of bacon. Two unicorns start laughing at the end of the bar. One says, “Hee hee hee, he thinks Star Wars is real!” The other unicorn said, “It isn't?” This bad joke is brought to you by Off the Wagon. Whether you believe in unicorns, Star Wars or just everything bacon, you can believe you'll find something fun at Off the Wagon Toys. Off the Wagon Toys for people who are... well... a little off their wagon.

*(This could become a whole series of ads using a new joke each time as the opening. It would get people listening just to hear the next joke. Just remember that jokes don't have to make sense, they just can't be predictable. Have a competition amongst your staff to write clever jokes and you would have a campaign people would talk about for years.)*

## Big Boy Gifts

You walk into the party with a gift. Not just any gift, one wrapped in bacon paper. They know you went to Off the Wagon. You could have mailed it in and



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bought something safe and boring. But now everyone wants to know what is in the package. It has a point. Could it be a unicorn? Could it be Luke Skywalker with a light saber? You know everyone is staring. The birthday boy grabs your gift first. Like everyone else he's dying to know. He knows he only turns thirty once. Off the Wagon Toys for people who are... well... a little off their wagon.

*(This gift uses humor – the unexpected punchline of the “boy” turning thirty – as the emotional connection. The story has an element of curiosity and the value of thoughtfulness [another word for ‘smart’]. Notice how the ad never reveals what the toy actually was. When you leave something out like that, you allow the listener/reader to fill in the blanks with their own imagination. This helps make the ad more personal and meaningful to them because they created part of it.)*

## Business: Deanna Dash's Toy Shop (Fay Parker, director)

Lower Bay Street  
Bridgetown BB 11156  
Barbados  
(246) 426-1866  
[ddts@caribsurf.com](mailto:ddts@caribsurf.com)

Our tagline is PLAY-LEARN-CREATE-FUN! Your year-round, family owned, children's shop packed with your child's birthday, fun & educational playthings

**Message/Goal:** Get to top of customers minds as their first place to

go to & to draw traffic

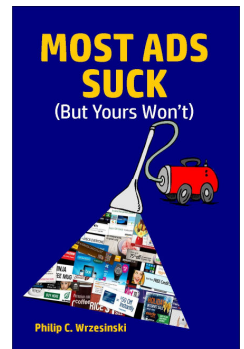
**Values:** Dedicated, Focus, Eager

**Words:** Resource, Willing Enthusiastic, Happy Blissful

**My Notes:** This is another toy store, but unlike Off the Wagon that focuses more on novelty and gag gifts, Deanna Dash's Toy Shop sells play value and growth and education and imagination and joy. I have to admit, however, that I changed a couple of the words they gave me. I changed “Willing” to “Enthusiastic” and “Happy” to “Blissful”. Willing and Happy were too common. If you want your writing to be more interesting, I highly recommend you use your thesaurus to find less common words. Rare and different words get people to perk up and pay more attention.

## Play Value

Your daughter has a certain enthusiasm she reserves only for special toys. Being the parent you are, you dig a little deeper. What causes some toys to bring her bliss while she ignores the others? You start to see the pattern. Her favorite toys don't do a whole lot. She uses her imagination to bring them to life, just like the sales lady at Deanna Dash's Toy Shop said she would. You think to yourself, maybe there is something to this thing called Play Value. For now you're just happy to have found this new resource. Deanna Dash's Toy shop, when the right toy is what you need.



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*(Toy stores have it easy when playing the emotion card. Speak to the heart? Speak about a child. Gets to the heart of every parent everywhere. This ad relates the discovery of a focused parent with the teachings of the typical specialty toy store. Any parent who studies their children at play knows this about toys. Deanna Dash's Toy Shop is set up to be the expert for parents who study.)*

## That One Face

Your child has that one face he makes when you know you did it right. You describe it to your friends as pure bliss mixed with a healthy dose of "Mom, Dad, come look!" enthusiasm. He shows it more often now that you're buying toys from Deanna Dash's Toy Shop. They help you choose toys carefully, matching play type to your child's curiosities and interests. You know the difference the right toys make. You've seen the look on your child's face. Deanna Dash's Toy Shop, when the right toy is what you need.

*(Most people don't give as much thought to toys as they should. This ad shows in one sentence what Deanna Dash's Toy Shop will do to help the dedicated, focused, eager customers find the right toys and how to recognize when their child has those kinds of toys. You will notice that the description of the "one face" is somewhat open-ended to allow the customer to paint his or her own picture. Those that instinctively know that face will be coming to Deanna's soon.)*

## Dear Parents

Dear Parents, we're sorry your child didn't show as much enthusiasm for the other birthday presents as he did for the ones you gave him wrapped in Deanna Dash's paper. You saw him go after those gifts first and start playing with them before he even opened the rest. His blissful heart knows the difference between the fun toys that engage and the toys that merely entertain, even if his brain doesn't yet understand. You might want to remind your friends that the best resource for toys the kids really want is Deanna Dash's Toy Shop. Then their gifts will get opened, too.

*(‘Dear Audience’ ads are an interesting technique. In reality this ad isn't talking to the parents who DID buy toys from Deanna Dash's, but all the parents who didn't. This ad also makes a point that other stores only sell crap. You may get a complaint or two, but as Roy H. Williams says, "The risk of insult is the price of clarity." When you truly believe your product is superior to someone else's product, you can make that claim – as in "toys that engage versus toys that merely entertain" – and understand that not everyone will agree. Those that agree, however, will be moved to act.)*

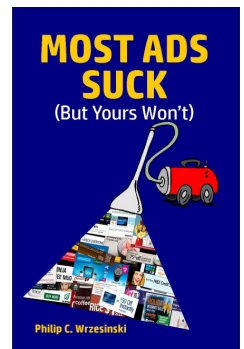
## Business: Printer Source Plus (Barb Smith)

2903 W Michigan Ave

Jackson, MI 49202

(517) 817-0680

[www.printersourceplus.com](http://www.printersourceplus.com)





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We service and sell printers, copiers and ink cartridges. We refill used cartridges to manufacturer specs and also sell new equipment. We offer on-site repairs and ink delivery and stand behind our product 100%.

**Message/Goal:** To drive more walk-in traffic and help us pick up more of the consumer market.

**Values:** Reliability, Responsible, Caring

**My Notes:** Barb had originally responded to my request for submissions for this book. Ultimately, in between the time she sent in her submission and the time I started writing this book she hired me to help her create a campaign. We sat down a couple times to go through an uncover process to help me understand her business and her industry and what she wanted to accomplish. I did a little research on the side about her industry and together we came to the conclusion that there were likely two reasons why people didn't buy her ink.

The first would be people who didn't even think about ink. Those people only acted when their cartridge ran out and bought their ink from the most convenient place they could think of. She needed to be more in the top of their mind if she wanted to get their business.

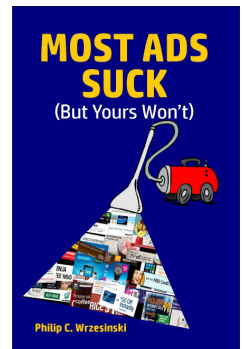
The second group would be people who just didn't trust recycled ink cartridges.

I devised two campaigns specifically for each group. She started the Awareness Campaign in January 2017 and saw an immediate increase in walk-in traffic. More importantly, she also saw a jump in business from her business clients, too. Some of them had forgotten to think about their ink.

## Awareness Campaign

Can I get you to think about ink for your printer? Just for a few seconds? You usually don't think, until the warning message pops up and you get a new cartridge on your way home. That cartridge wants you to think about it. You could get a new one and pay for the container and the ink, or you could get a recycled one and just pay for the ink. Recycled cartridges from Printer Source Plus have more ink and cost you less. That's a good thought. Printer Source Plus, the smart choice when you think about your ink.

Do you ever think about ink? No you don't. Only when your cartridge runs out on your printer. And then only enough to add it to your grocery list. Give your ink a little more thought. New cartridges at the chain stores cost you the ink *and* the cartridge. At Printer Source Plus, we fill recycled cartridges right here at the store and only charge you for the ink. More ink that costs you less. That's a good thought. Printer Source Plus, the smart choice when you think about your ink.



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If you really stopped to think about the ink for your printer, your first thought would be, "Why can't they make a bigger cartridge that doesn't run out so fast?" Your second thought is, "Why are they so expensive?" They *could* put more ink in the cartridges if they wanted. But they don't. We do. We fill recycled cartridges as full as they go and only charge you for the ink, not all the packaging. Yeah, that's the answer to the second question. Printer Source Plus, the smart choice when you think about your ink.

*(Notice how I only use the name of the company a couple times in the ad. If I paint a good enough story about you, you'll remember me. I also don't mention the address. People can only remember one point. Would you rather they remember where you are or why they need you? Only one of those drives new traffic to your door.)*

## Trust Campaign

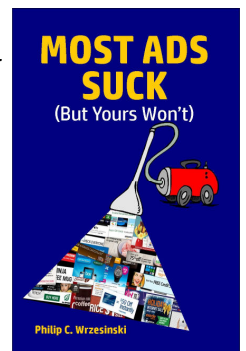
You've been burned before. You thought buying recycled ink for your printer was smart so you ordered online and got screwed. They didn't work as well or last as long. That's not the case with recycled ink from Printer Source Plus. First, our technicians fill all our cartridges right here in Jackson so we control the quality. Second we guarantee your ink will work as well or better than the original or we will replace them for FREE. Printer Source Plus, your safe bet when you think about your ink.

Everyone has a story about the guy who sold them half-filled

recycled ink for their printer and screwed them out of a bundle. You chuckle and tell yourself you won't make that mistake. You go to Printer Source Plus where the cartridges are made right on site to control the quality. If they aren't filled and working to your satisfaction, You get replacement ink for FREE. When everyone else is telling their horror stories, you tell them they all should have gone to Printer Source Plus. Printer Source Plus, your safe bet when you think about your ink.

Some things sound too good to be true – like recycled ink cartridges that save the planet and save you money. Yeah, right. Snake oil. We agree. Not all recycled cartridges are made the same. That's why Printer Source Plus makes all our cartridges on site – so we control the quality. That's why our recycled ink comes with a 100% Money-Back Guarantee. 100% recycled, 100% guaranteed. 100% exactly what you need. Printer Source Plus, your safe bet when you think about your ink.

*(Trust is hard to earn. These ads use Printer Source Plus' money-back guarantee and the fact they fill the cartridges on site to help build that trust. You will also notice that this campaign also relies on the "think about your ink" phrase. This helps reinforce the earlier campaign and ties all of their ads back to a single narrative.)*



# Most Ads Suck (But Yours Won't)

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## Business: The Fourth Wall

3007 Page Avenue  
Jackson, MI 49202

[www.the4thwall.info](http://www.the4thwall.info)

The Fourth Wall is a performing arts venue offering low-cost, high-value entertainment and a small, cozy venue for those who wish to practice and experiment with their art. They host poetry slams, musical performances, open-mic nights, and drama.

**Goal:** To let people know they are welcome to come perform or just enjoy the performances without spending an arm and a leg

**Values:** Affordable, Welcoming, Encouraging

**My Notes:** If you want to write better ads, first learn to write poetry. The poet is the writer who is tasked with getting our attention, giving us a new perspective, and making us feel something through the words he or she chooses. If you want to know if the ads you are writing are reaching the level of poetry, take your ads to a poetry slam. I did. I took fourteen ads I had written for my own business plus the two I wrote specifically for The Fourth Wall and told the audience up front I was going to be reading ads and would stop at the first boo or hiss. I read for the full eight minutes with snapping fingers echoing in the background the whole time (at poetry slams they snap instead of clap).

## Acoustic Roots

You grab your guitar, hoping the beat-up case makes it look like

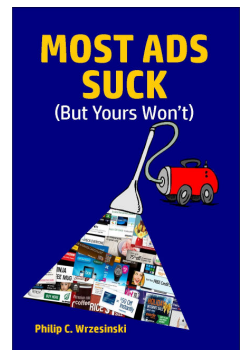
you've been around. You take a deep breath as you enter, looking for one person you might recognize. The guy on the stage is pretty good. You take another glance around. You aren't the only nervous face with a second-hand guitar. Pretty soon it's your turn on stage. The audience claps and cheers and encourages you to go on. You can finally smile. You're in the right place. You're at Acoustic Roots at The Fourth Wall. Every Thursday at 8pm.

*(This is the story of every amateur performer. Even the professionals get butterflies. Nerves, calmness, then acceptance. It is that acceptance that The Fourth Wall is selling through their open-mic nights like this one.)*

## The Fourth Wall

Not everyone can perform. That's what they told you when you were younger. Something about God-given talent that maybe God forgot about when he made you. Oh, you wanted to prove them wrong. You know you're better than they said. You just need a stage to show that God never gave up on you. That's what The Fourth Wall is all about. A stage for dreamers. A stage for schemers. A stage for singers and songwriters. A stage for actors and poets and comedians. A stage to show off your talents, God-given and otherwise. Welcome to The Fourth Wall.

*(This ad speaks to those who aren't necessarily*



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*looking for stardom, just a chance to perform.)*

## Business: Toy House (now closed)

**My Notes:** We closed in December 2016 due to market conditions in our city and my desire to do more writing, speaking, and teaching. *(Our market had shrunk 50% in 8 years. Our market share was four times the average for an independent toy store, but the market was no longer big enough to support a store our size.)* These are some of my favorite ads going back to 2005 when I first met Roy H. Williams, who challenged me to write better material.

## Horses, Cars, and Froggies

When you were three you galloped down the aisles on stick horses. At six, you brushed the mane of your My Little Pony. At nine you used your own allowance to start your Breyer Horse collection. And on your sixteenth birthday, you drove the family station wagon here just for a book on how to draw horses. Now on your way to college, your parents wanted a gift. I handed them Horse-opoly. They smiled and said, "How did you know?" Just a guess. Toy House in downtown Jackson. We're here to make you smile.

Your first car was a coupe that you drove Fred Flintstone style up and down the drive. As you got bigger your cars got smaller until they fit in the palm of your hand. Fast cars, fancy cars, fun cars - you owned hundreds. Now you're a graduate. Your parents smiled when we showed them how to hide the real car keys inside the box

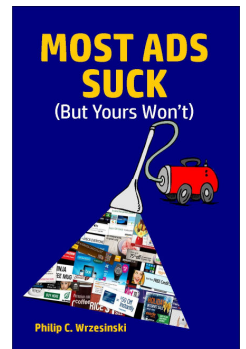
of the model car. Don't know which you liked more. The model was built and painted before the weekend was over. Toy House in downtown Jackson. We're here to make you smile.

She saw the model car on his desk. He was a man of detail. He saw her drawings of horses. She had talent and passion. On their wedding they compromised, he promised not to wear the NASCAR jacket if she didn't wear the cowboy boots. But when they said it was a boy, we were ready with both horses and cars. Once again they found a compromise. They smiled when they saw it – Froggies. Toy House and Baby Too. No matter where you are in life, we're here to make you smile.

*(I ran this series of ads in September, October and November 2010. I use this to illustrate how you can have a story in each ad that also fits into a larger story arc. This ad was one from which we got a lot of feedback from people saying how the ads touched them. Oh, and the first two ads were mostly true. Here is the funny part. The third ad was also true, but it wasn't the two people from the first ads!)*

## Sheila's Baby Daughter

Squealing rubber, crunching metal, breaking glass. Sheila's baby daughter, Livvy, was in the back seat. The next day she called to thank me for installing the car seat that saved Livvy's life. This is Phil



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Wrzesinski from the Toy House. Since that day my staff and I have installed over two thousand car seats to keep kids like Livvy safe and give parents and grandparents peace of mind. It's just something we believe in. I guess you can call that the Toy House Way.

*(This was what I called my first "Wizard" ad because Roy helped me write this during the Secret Formulas class. He took a 60-second ad I had written and crossed off half the words until this was left. The day I read it to Sheila to get her approval happened to be her birthday. Shortly after this ad we went from installing a couple car seats a week to a couple car seats a day.)*

## God Bless You

He left Detroit 9am Christmas Eve. Someone somewhere had to have the one toy his sweet little six-year old wanted. Six cities... seven stores later, he stood, travel-weary, across the counter from me. "I suppose you don't have any Simon games either." As I handed over the last of our Simon games he smiled and said, "God Bless You!" Believe me, He already has. Merry Christmas from the Toy House in downtown Jackson. We're here to make you smile.

*(I ran this ad as my whole campaign for Christmas 2005. We had our biggest Christmas season ever! Notice how the ad doesn't talk about all of our services or selection. It doesn't mention our hours or specific location. Heck, it talked about an event that happened back in 1980 and a product that we didn't even sell at that time. But it spoke to the heart. Nostalgia is powerful. As a multi-generational*

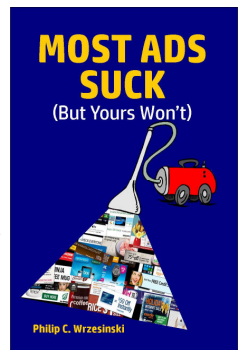
*business that catered to new babies, birthdays and Christmas, we owned Nostalgia.)*

## The Men's Bathroom

I couldn't believe it. They were taking customers into the men's bathroom. Yes, my staff was taking men and women, young and old into our men's bathroom. And the customers were coming out laughing and giggling, oh yeah, and buying, too. I guess when you find a product that cool, you just have to show it off however and wherever you can. (laugh) The men's bathroom, gotta love it. Toy House in downtown Jackson. We're here to make you smile.

*(This was the greatest single ad I ever ran. It took guts. Notice how I never mentioned the product being sold. I only ran this for one month – August 2008. The first day it ran the deejays started speculating on air what I was selling in the men's bathroom. By the third day even the deejays on stations where the ad wasn't playing were talking about it. Soon the local television talk show host was talking about it. People would ask me about it on the street. In March 2009 I had a customer ask me about it because as she said, "It was all we talked about at the adult table at Christmas Dinner."*

*The word-of-mouth we generated from that single ad was beyond belief. Best of all, no one spilled the beans. If my staff or family was asked what was*





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*going on in the men's bathroom – and they were for years! – they simply said, "Come down to the store and we'll show you.")*

## Free Giftwrapping

Some like to rip theirs off quickly in the heat of the moment. Others run their fingers down the seam, taking it off slowly savoring every second. Pulses quicken, breathing deepens, the anticipation is almost agonizing. Usually it's the teddies, occasionally polka dots. Always there is a smile. There's nothing quite like Free Giftwrapping at the Toy House. What were you thinking about? Toy House in downtown Jackson. The giftwrapping's free, the smiles priceless.

*(I got some flak for this ad. I'm okay with that. But it does beg the question of whether sex sells – and especially whether sex should be used in a toy store ad. Sex does sell. But only when it relates back to the message of the ad. Gratuitous sex doesn't sell. Gratuitous humor doesn't sell. In fact, sex and humor can backfire on you if you don't use them carefully. People might remember the sex or the humor, but not the company. By the way, if you thought this ad was about sex, you brought that thought to the table, not me. I was writing about people opening giftwrapped packages.)*

## Epilogue

Most ads suck. Yours won't. You now have the principles to make your content more memorable and effective. Just be

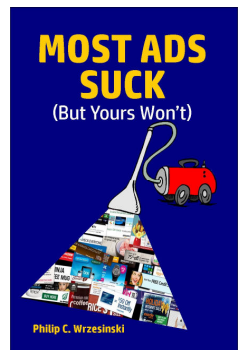
prepared. People will stop you on the street to comment on your ads. Many will tell you how much they love them. Some will tell you how much they hate them. It is that latter crowd that tells you you're making a difference. That means they are listening.

Most importantly, they will be coming in to use your business because you are who they will think of first when they need what you have to offer.

## Acknowledgements

It was May of 2005 when I first met The Wizard. I had already read his trilogy of books. I convinced my parents (my bosses at our family business) that it was worth the money for me to finally attend one of his classes: Secret Formulas of the Wizard of Ads, taught by Roy H. Williams, aka The Wizard of Ads. Much of my obsession with advertising began in that classroom and much of what I learned traces directly back to Roy. That is why each chapter here begins with a Roy H. Williams quote. I cannot thank him enough for releasing the beagle in my brain and giving that beagle a wonderful scent to follow.

I also have to thank a few of Roy's partners and associates I have met along the way. Through their writings and advice, Tim Miles, Jeff Sexton,



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Chris Maddock, and Tom Wanek have helped keep me on course with my ideas and helped me improve my own writing.

Seth Godin ranks up there with Roy as another huge influence on my thoughts about advertising and the making of this book. Although on the surface this book teaches you how to get your message to the masses, which seemingly goes against Seth's permission-based philosophy, at its core, this book is about reaching your tribe. Seth's book *Tribes* helped me understand the importance and power of reaching out to and collaborating with people with shared values. Through the now offline website [www.triibes.com](http://www.triibes.com) Seth created, I met several people who have helped me along the way including Joel D Canfield who has been instrumental in helping all my books get to print, and Tom Bentley, whose writing style brings me joy every day. Without Tom's mad editing skills, I wouldn't have this wonderful book you've just read. A couple other fellow triibesters are featured in Chapter 9—Samples including John W. Furst and Becky Blanton.

Finally, I would like to thank all the people who allowed me to use their businesses for samples. I asked you in my blog at [www.PhilsForum.com](http://www.PhilsForum.com) for volunteers and several hearty people responded. Much to my delight, I got a beautiful cross-section of different types of companies from all around the world.

## About the Author

Phil Wrzesinski is an entrepreneur like you who truly lives out his mission to *Have Fun Helping Others*.

He started working retail in 1973 at the ripe age of seven when his grandfather paid him 10 cents an hour to put price tags on boxes. He spent his early adulthood in the camping field using wilderness activities to teach Team Building Skills.

In 1993 Phil left Team Building to go back to retail. He honed his entrepreneurial skills running the largest independent toy store in America ([Toy House and Baby Too](#)) until deciding to close the store in December 2016.

During that time he also started a weekly radio show, a monthly magazine, and a successful speaking career. For the last 17 years, Phil also teaches a class twice a month at the local hospital for expectant fathers.

Phil has authored several eBooks he gives away FREE on his website to level the playing field for independent retailers and small businesses.

Currently Phil is the National Sales Manager for [HABA USA](#) toy company.

You can learn more at [www.PhilsForum.com](http://www.PhilsForum.com).

