

Intensive Advertising

By John E. Kennedy

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Table of Contents:

About the Author	3
Introduction	4
Chapter 1 Intensive Advertising	5
Chapter 2 Salesmanship Multiplied	7
Chapter 3 Good Advertising is News	9
Chapter 4 How Short Should an Ad Be?	12
Chapter 5 To Plan and Write Strong Ads	16

About the Author



John E. Kennedy was born in Canada in 1864. He was in the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police force when he first became interested in advertising. Because of the lonesome days and nights in the emptiness of Northern Canada, Kennedy spent a lot of time studying sales copy.

Kennedy focused his efforts on identifying the essential principles of advertising to simplify the process and improve results. He eventually moved to the U.S. and became a copywriter for Dr. Shoop's Family Medicine Co. where he perfected his advertising skills.

In 1905 (some historians say it was 1904), John E. Kennedy had a meeting with Albert D. Lasker who was a partner at Lord and Thomas advertising agency in Chicago. During their meeting Kennedy said, *"Advertising is a very simple thing. I can give it to you in three words, it is **salesmanship in print**"* Lasker was so impressed with Kennedy that he offered him the opportunity to prove the effectiveness of his advertising concepts. After that meeting, Kennedy went to work for Lord & Thomas and became the highest paid copywriter in the industry.

In addition to "Salesmanship-In-Print", Kennedy taught Lasker another simple and effective concept that he called "Reason-Why Advertising", in which you give a reason why people should want your product or service.

Kennedy wrote his advertising principles into a series of lessons, which were then used to train the Lord & Thomas copywriters. Soon after, Lord & Thomas became the training center of the advertising world. Their copywriters were so good that other agencies began luring them away with high salaries. The lessons were eventually compiled into a book titled "The Book of Advertising Tests".

In 1906 Kennedy left Lord & Thomas to establish his own business and in 1907 he became a principal in Ethridge-Kennedy Company in New York.

John E. Kennedy died at the age of 64 on January 8, 1928. Although his advertising career was short, he made a tremendous impact in that industry. Perhaps Albert Lasker said it best, *"The history of advertising could never be written without first place being given to John E. Kennedy, for every copywriter throughout the length and breadth of this land is today being guided by the principles he laid down."*

Introduction

In 1914 John E. Kennedy was paid **\$25,000** by a group of publishers to advise them on what could be done by advertisers to improve their advertising results. Part of that advice became a report that Kennedy appropriately named **Intensive Advertising** because you can produce much better and more "intensive" results by using the advertising principles he reveals in this report.

Editor's Note:

Kennedy's original style of writing included a lot of underlining and capitalizing to add emphasis. To preserve most of the original effect that was intended by Kennedy, the capitalizing has not been altered, but the underlining has been removed to reduce strain on the eyes.

Intensive Advertising

The term "Intensive Advertising" is new.

So we will explain it here – by analogy.

And we will take for our demonstration a very practical example of "Intensive" policy. Viz. – Intensive Gardening. As commercially practiced in the suburbs of Paris, France.

These have for years cultivated market gardens that, in productiveness, are among the wonders of the world.

Such gardens average only about two acres each.

But of these two acres are taken annually more vegetables through intensive cultivation than could be taken from one hundred acres by the usual methods.

Many of these tiny gardens are located on vacant city lots.

On just such suburban lots as we, in America, devote to the gentle art of bill-posting, or to the careless culture of the ripe tomato can.

The ground rents paid by the "Maraichers" average about \$200 to \$250 per year, per acre.

That for the use of the bare, unfertilized and often miserably poor soil, – as a foundation.

But production, through intensive culture, is so enormous that it is highly profitable even at such rentals.

For those Intensive gardens are in reality nature-factories.

So abnormally great is their productiveness that they can only be thought of as making vegetables by steam. Fifty tons per acre is a common output yearly. Think that into pounds, viz. – 100,000 per acre.

Seven huge crops per season, instead of the customary one, or at most two, crops under conventional methods.

The average gross income is \$1500 per acre from these "vegetable factories." Ranging up to \$6,000 per acre yearly, in some cases.

That— my dear Sir, is — "Intensive Gardening." Now here's the rub! All that this intensive principle means to gardening it can and does mean — when properly applied — to Advertising.

When the self -same policy of deliberate concentration, thoroughness, and elimination of waste, is applied to advertising as faithfully and intelligently as it is applied to gardening intensively.

Salesmanship Multiplied

What is good advertising?

Merely Salesmanship multiplied.

Multiplied mechanically, by the Printing Press.

With the salary of a single Salesman, it is now possible to reach 1,000 probable customers for every individual that Salesman could have reached personally.

And with the self-same Selling Talk.

But, – for all this it does not supplant the Personal Salesman. It increases his value instead.

By doing the lesser "missionary" work at a lower cost than he could afford to do it. Thereby conserving his time and energies for the more profitable work of Climaxing Sales.

Just as machinery, in mills, increased the earning power of Operatives. By increasing their productiveness.

Advertising is nothing more than Salesmanship. But good Advertising is Salesmanship intensified.

So as to compensate for the necessary absence of the personal magnetism of the Personal Salesman.

Wasteful methods are out of place today.

And to fill costly advertising Space with anything less than Intensified Salesmanship is to waste Space.

By wasting larger possibilities from that Space. For this reason we must now dismiss the fatal fatuity of merely "Keeping the Name before the People."

Which is less than a fifth part of Advertising possibility obtainable from the self-same Space, and at the self-same cost.

Observe the mortuary records in such wasteful use of potential Advertising Space,- "Sunny Jim" is dead.

"Spotless Town" is off the map.

"The Smile that Won't Come Off" came off and never came on again after the money was spent.

"The Great firm of John Jones & Co." is out of business through too much "Keeping the Name of Jones before the People" and too little Salesmanship in the advertising.

All of which demonstrates for the thousandth time that Advertising Space, even in the best mediums, is not Advertising but only a receptacle for the conveyance of Salesmanship. Space can only multiply the precise percentage of Salesmanship we type into it. Properly used, Advertising space is about the cheapest commodity in general use today. Improperly used it is the dearest.

For Space is merely a multiplier.

Put 2% of Salesmanship into it, with 98% of "guff" and that 2% will be multiplied by as many thousands of readers as the advertisement attracts.

Put 98% of Salesmanship into it and the Space will produce just 4,800% more of Results for the self-same investment.

It is Sales-Influence alone that we buy Space for.

And "Sales-Influence" is only another name for Salesmanship. Good advertising is, therefore, good Salesmanship. But, intensified, so as to compensate for lack of the Personal Salesman's persona magnetism.

Good Advertising is News

Consider the Newspaper!

Which items in it do you read first?

Not always those with the screaming flare heads. Because Display alone is no longer interesting. It is News-Interest that attracts Readers now.

Without that commanding News-Interest display would merely cause us to "see" the

We "see" many things from the street car windows that we are not even conscious of having seen.

We "see" them without realizing them, absorbing them, or being influenced by them in the slightest degree.

They leave no record on the mind.

And so it is with mere Display in Advertising. Without News-Interest display is largely wasted.

And with sufficient News-Interest in the title, extravagant Display is entirely unnecessary, – a mere waste of Space.

Remember this always, –

Display alone, be it ever so extravagant, cannot compensate for lack of News-Interest in the heading.

It cannot compel conviction, or germinate a Buying Impulse in the mind. The advertisement which would profitably sell goods today must be read with as much interest as news.

It must stir Thought – prompt buying Impulse – and inspire Action upon that Impulse.

So – "getting seen" helps little if the Advertisement accomplishes nothing more tangible than that.

Active News-Interest is therefore a first essential in the title of the Ad.

And with that essential secured, a moderate size of type for title, and a reasonably solid setting of "news-type" for body is entirely effective without heavy waste for white space and fancy borders.

Familiar news-type typography is more inviting to the eye than billboard Display at close Newspaper range.

Certain of the simple old -style types, of moderate size, are so legible and familiar that they read much more freely than larger type of later styles. In fact, they almost read themselves, at first glance, with practically no eye-effort. When a live News-Interest, expressed in primer thought, is set in such familiar size and style of type the message becomes so absorbent it almost soaks in irresistibly.

This with even quick and casual reading.

Straight Shop Talk can be dressed so as to overflow with News-Interest for the class aimed at.

If this were not true, Salesmen could not get a hearing for the self -same kind of Shop Talk with previously uninterested prospective customers.

No item of news is likely to be more interesting to a Manufacturer than an advertisement which reveals to him an easy means of reducing the cost of his product –improving it without added cost – or increasing his profits.

And no article offered for sale, through Advertising, is likely to be devoid of some such News-Interest as that. News-Interest for the class of Readers that constitutes the natural market for the article advertised.

The Interest need not extend beyond that class, all other Readers being negligible, in Advertising.

Good Advertising is plain Salesmanship intensified.

A keg of Nails may be "just a keg of Nails" to a mere "Order-Taker." But – to a real Salesman that keg of Nails bristles with characteristics.

To him, these Nails are made of a certain kind of metal, by a certain kind of process, and will do certain things better than any other Nails on the market at the same price.

Moreover, he can tell you why they will do these things better, and other facts about them that our "Order Taker" ne'er dreamt of.

Although he could, should and would have studied up and known all about these Selling Points if he had the instinct of the Salesman, with the industry to utilize it.

The Advertiser, or Salesman-on-Paper, who would win success today, through the printed page, must realize, and act upon the following facts, viz: – He must vitalize his Advertising with active News-Interest, profitable Information and clinching Reason Why.

Before he can hope for notable, or even noticeable, results from the money he spends for Space.

He must realize that competition is as keen today in Printed Salesmanship as it is in Personal Salesmanship.

And that mere "Keeping-the-name-before-the-People" (with the sort of Publicity it stands for) is as weak and profitless today in competitive Advertising as mere "Order-Taking" would be in competition with strong, able and aggressive personal Salesmanship.

"Good Advertising is News" first of all. But it is Salesmanship all the time.

How Short Should an Ad. Be?

That depends upon what it has to say!

If it has nothing to say worth reading, it should be mighty short indeed.

If it has no News-Interest, or no Information of value to the Reader, he will not go beyond the first few words.

He will read just far enough to find out that the Ad. has nothing to say.

And the recognition of this accounts for the general attitude of too many Advertisers toward Advertising.

They look upon it as necessarily and inevitably uninteresting. Starting in with that assumption they assert that – "Copy should be extremely brief."

"And these displayed in big black-faced type." "With Splurge pictures and lots of white space." Such is the popular impression of good Advertising.

"Blank's Whiskey, – that's all!"

"Good Morning, – have you used Blank's Soap?" They are brief, – and say nothing. They might, with advantage, have been briefer yet.

They might have said "Blank's Whiskey" or "Blank's Soap."

And thus emphasized the brands further by the omission of the remaining words that say nothing worth saying.

"Cable Code Copy" is the pet name for this kind of General Publicity. Its use is a frank admission on the part of the Advertiser that People will not read more about their subject in the way they present it.

It is an acceptance of the thoughtless theory that Advertising is an imposition upon Readers.

– That People do not willingly read Advertising, and so must be clubbed into seeing it, whether they want to or not.

Its aim is to "Strike the Eye" instead of interest the Mind, educate and inform. So, it has been fittingly called "Eye-Deep" Advertising.

The term supplies a correct key to its very superficial effect, – its lack of Selling Influence.

How long should a good Advertisement be?

How long should a good Salesman talk to his Customer in selling goods? Just long enough to make his point.

Just long enough to clinch the Sale, if that be humanly possible.

Provided he can make his Selling Talk interesting enough to hold his Customer's attention until the last word needed to climax what he set out to do. And no longer.

It is not necessary that the Selling Talk be interesting to the Bystander. Or any other than the Prospective Purchaser.

It need not be of interest to "the Advertising world" at all.

It need not be reckoned "catchy," "clever," "witty," or epigrammatic. But – it must sell or help sell goods.

It must leave on the Reader's mind a clear-cut impression of the best feature of the goods with a strong Buying Impulse toward them.

Instead of leaving any diverting impression regarding the "cleverness" or other quality in the Ad itself or the Writer there of. Because, it is not the Ad that is to be sold but the Goods advertised in the advertisement.

This is where the "clever" catchy advertising of the "Eye-Deep" variety makes its most costly error.

Costly to the Man who Pays the Bills. It advertises the Advertising. Instead of advertising the Goods.

It leaves the Reader's Mind upon the "Catch Phrase," "striking picture," or other pyrotechnic Eye-Catcher.

Instead of leaving it upon the desirable features of the Goods themselves, as the last and strongest and best-remembered impression.

Good Advertising should be conscientiously planned with the latter as sole objective.

To Sell Goods requires Salesmanship.

And Salesmanship cannot be expressed without words.

So the rational course, in Advertising, is to use words enough, and space enough, to properly express proper Salesmanship for the article advertised.

– To produce an interesting reading, a firm conviction, and an active Buying Impulse after each Advertisement.

Not a word more than is necessary to do this. And, not a word less.

The Boy who tried to knock the apple off the branch ten feet beyond his utmost reach with a stick only 9 ft. 11 inches was in a similar position to the Advertiser who starves his "Printed Salesmanship" for want of the necessary word or necessary space to make his Advertising effective.

If Advertising be given sufficient News-Interest, Information, and Selling force to pay the reader it can be made as long as the average Magazine Article, or Newspaper Editorial (if necessary) and with profit. Between the strong Advertisement and the strong Editorial there is, after all, very little difference.

Both have a purpose to achieve with Readers.

Neither will be read unless it possesses sufficient news-interest, information or conviction to earn a reading.

And either can earn that if the subject and treatment be judiciously handled. Brisbane's editorials are read by millions.

Talmage's Sermons were read by millions, in Newspapers alongside of and in open competition with "Live News Topics."

Lawson's chapters on "Frenzied Finance" in Everybody's Magazine were not short nor were his later Copper advertisements.

All of these were read from beginning to end by millions of busy people.

Read for the News-Interest and Information they contained. Read because People found them worth reading.

And the self-same matter would have commanded the self-same reading in the Advertising columns if business motive had placed them there.

– With similar title -interest and similar setting, the length of the articles would have been an attraction as indicating the probable importance of the subject.

A good Advertisement should be just long enough to accomplish its Selling Purpose – no longer – or shorter.

To Plan and Write Strong Ads

Start with the right Point-of-View. Consider what Advertising is for. Viz. – to help Sell Goods – nothing less. Write the copy with that object in mind. Even if Salesmen are employed to close the sales. Don't let yourself down to mere "Keeping the Name before the People." Don't be satisfied to produce mere "Publicity."

Because, – if you do you will never achieve real strong vitalized Salesmanship - on- One good, strong, convincing piece of Advertising copy will sell, or help to sell, more goods than 50 pieces of "Eye-deep Publicity."

So take fifty times the time, if necessary to produce it.

And if twelve run-of-mine ads were enough to do the job before, six such pieces of real virile Salesmanship -on-Paper, rotated, will do the job much better.

Good Mail Order Ads run without change for years on end.

Because, no new Ads since written could approach them in actual Sales production per dollar invested for space.

The proof of this is available if you want it.

And that proof shows that the life of a really good and complete piece of copy is practically limitless.

Make up your mind to concentrate all your effort and all the material you possess upon the single Ad. you are writing at the time.

Intensify it, with every selling point you know of.

Don't try to save out essentials for other Ads of the series.

Put all of the very best your closest study can provide into the single Ad you are then writing.

And when all has been skillfully incorporated, start in to prune it of unnecessaries. Cut out every needless word first.

Then cut out every selling thought that can be spared without weakening the Salesmanship.

Then review the whole work as coldly as your worst critic might. But, from the standpoint of your prospective customers only. Not from the standpoint of the mere Advertising World. Disregard that entirely – forget it.

Because, it does not matter what the Advertising World thinks about your copy if you can make it sell goods profitably.

Because the Advertising World knows infinitely less about the proposition you are then working upon than you do.

That's if you earnestly and capably live up to the following formula. First study your Customers. Sit down, close the door, and leisurely think out who are the Natural Buyers of the Article to be Advertised.

Make a penciled list of some typical cases. Interview these typical cases.

Ask why they have not already bought the Article you are about to Advertise, or bough more of it.

Ask what objections they would probably raise against the article if a Salesman called upon them and tried to sell it to them.

Then list the probable objections.

And then find the most conclusive answer to these objections. Next, compile all the Selling Points of the Article in question.

And remember that its exclusive selling points are to be the backbone of your Salesmanship.

To say that a certain machine will cut ice would avail little in advertising it against competing machines – all of which will cut ice.

It will be necessary to tell how much ice it would cut in a given time. At a given cost per ton. And why.

Contrasted with the cost by other Machines that cut ice at higher cost –And why at higher cost.

Well, when all the selling points in our subject have been marshalled and listed, – When all the objections which would probably be raised by our customers have been assembled and answered we are then ready to construct the case.

So we come back to a mental conception of the typical buyer of this Article again. In order to know how best to approach him. How best to interest him in the Ad.

How best to get him "with us" in reading the Ad. instead of "against us."

In other words how to get him into a receptive attitude instead of into a combative attitude.

Next we estimate at what point our Advertised Article is most likely to touch his interest.

Which, of all our selling features, are most likely to appeal to him strongest.

Then we make that feature the pivot upon which to swing the whole argument and all the other features in the order of their relative importance – to him.

Now we start in to write the Ad.

And we write it as if this was the only Ad. we ever meant to use. We write it so that it is a complete selling canvass for the Article condensed into the fewest words that will express it.

This is the order of thoughts and requirements in writing it. First – News Interest. The title and the first lines must be invested with this to command a reading for the A That "News-Interest" must be kindred, and entirely natural, to the subject matter. Avoid by all means the far-fetched headings that disappoint the reader. Because, the revulsion following the feeling of being tricked would antagonize him against the Article advertised instead of leaving him favorable to it.

The News-Interest must therefore be evolved from the Subject itself. (Not faked-up from the outside and tied to it with a slender thread) And that News-Interest must exist somewhere in the subject itself or the Article could not be sold by any Salesman.

A live News-Interest for the man who should buy the article, even if for no one else. It is there – in the Subject.

So sit down and dig it out. Then play it up in the title. As the only proper "Eye-Catcher."

Which will be sure to catch the eye of the very men you want to reach with the Advertised article.

Even if it interested no one else.

If the title now possesses enough live News-Interest, the first few lines only need be devoted to introduction of the subject.

Because, we should then jump into the facts at once. Playing up the most interesting feature, first, the most convincing one last. Expressing the whole matter in primer-thought, and in language forms so simple that even a child of twelve would fully understand all it meant.

The object of this simplified language is not merely to avoid misunderstanding. But, to make the absorption of the meaning effortless for the reader.

To make it so apparent that the information will almost "soak-in" without any mental labor on his part. And beyond this, there is a valuable quality in simple thought-forms and familiar language which should never be overlooked. Viz. – its more ready acceptance as truth, when in these forms. For some undefined reason elaborate phrasing, intricate thought-forms, and high sounding words seem to impart suspicion to the Reader.

Where the simpler and more familiar forms seem to disarm it and carry the message home without arousing so many unspoken questions.

Perhaps because simple language simply spoken is characteristic of Sincerity.

* * *

And now for the climax.

This is where the majority of otherwise good advertisements fail. Their last lines lack the vital active quality. That intensive quality which makes the Reader want to buy the article, and want to do something toward buying it at once.

There is only one place in the Ad. for the planting of this spur action – And that is in the last sentence.

Which sentence should be carefully thought out, and framed up to climax all that has gone before into an active Impulse toward buying.

Make the Reader do something definite toward purchase at that stage and you have committed him unconsciously to a partial acceptance of your statement from which he will not be likely to later hedge.

Moreover, having moved him to action through the printed Salesmanship, his mind records the impressions deeper because of that action.

And he is henceforth more receptive to subsequent Salesmanship, printed or verbal, on the same subject.

He has imbibed the germ through your printed Salesmanship and it will henceforth "work while you sleep." If it now be nursed along with occasional

follow-up of consistent nature, he is in a fair way to become not only a Purchaser, but a well-informed advocate of the Advertised article.

If your Advertised Article be of a kind which you cannot reasonably hope to sell him through Printed Salesmanship, make it possible for him in the Adv. to do something toward purchasing. And then make him do it. In the last clinching sentence.

* * *

The advertising man who tries to do no more in his advertising than to "keep the name before the trade" –

Who wastes space by wasting the larger possibilities from that space –
Reminds me of the "man who held four aces."

And played them without looking at them.

Winning what he should have won with his customary "pair of Jacks."

Which conclusion makes the punishment fit the crime.

And is entirely satisfactory to the Writer of these articles.

Who, with a much abler Writer, in a larger field, believes in –

"Letting every man go to hell after his own fashion."