

15.

Advertising

How to develop
sales sense

PRACTICALLY EVERY HOME ECONOMIST employed by a business firm must work with her own company's advertising and sales promotion departments, and usually also with the advertising agency handling the firm's account. She has to think in terms of selling her company's product.

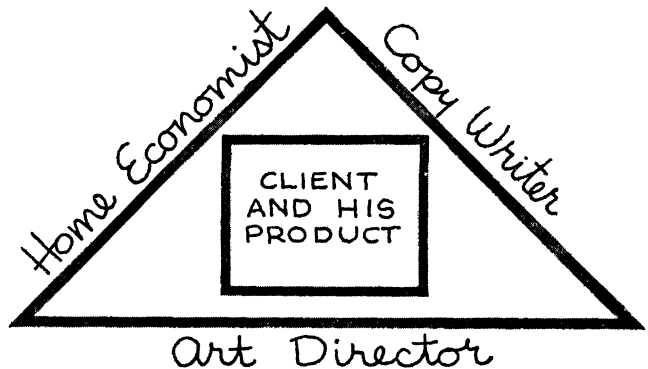
As a business home economist, your responsibility is to help copy writers and layout men do the most effective job of presenting your firm's product to homemakers. That means you must supply them with material which they can use to advantage: ideas, suggestions, recipes, etc., that will best sell the product. Also, you must help them — as unobtrusively and unofficially as possible — to express and illustrate those ideas in ways that will have most meaning and greatest appeal to homemakers. Your position is an important one, for you must be as good a diplomat as you are a home economist.

The preparation of any advertisement or campaign in which a home economist participates is a three-cornered affair — a triangle made up of

*An advertisement
is a central idea
poured into an attractive
mold and garnished with interest.*



the copy department on one side, the art department on another, and the home economics department on the third side. No one department works by itself. The other two are involved in practically every move or decision and all must center around the client and his product.



This situation, like other triangles in human relations, can cause problems if not thoroughly understood and wisely handled. Copy writers and layout men may get an idea that the home economist is trying to tell them what and how to do. The home economist may get an idea that she is a mere flunky to those other departments. A complete understanding of each other's responsibilities and of how these fit together is necessary in order to avoid ruffled feelings and time-and-energy-wasting friction. As an example, here roughly is the way the development of a food advertisement proceeds, at least in some agencies:

Granted that the basic approach of the campaign has been established, someone has an idea for an ad or a series of ads. It may be that one of the layout men has an inspiration for a certain type of illustration. He works up a rough layout, submits it to the higher-ups — the ones who deal directly with the client. If they consider it worth

EVERY HOME ECONOMIST IS IN ADVERTISING

Teachers, extension home economists, tea room managers, dietitians, finance counselors, business home economists — all sell their ideas and projects. Hence, every home economist is in the advertising business, needs to understand the true meaning of the term.

exploring, the home economist is called in to suggest dishes that will carry out the idea, and to develop recipes from which one or more can be selected to feature in the advertisement. The copy department is put to work on headlines and selling copy.

Or it may be that one of the copy writers has a bright idea for a headline or a particular copy slant which the agency heads feel should be worked up. In that case the home economist may be called in for her ideas before the art department is brought in, or vice versa.

Or it may be that the home economist herself suggests a new line of uses for the product in the home kitchen, or a fresh presentation of the basic uses. She submits her idea, accompanied by a memo giving her reasoning. It is fortified by a list of possible recipes to be developed, any one of which could make a dramatic photograph, and would be appealing and practical for home use. If her suggestion is thought important enough for further consideration, the layout and copy departments are called in to discuss the matter and work up roughs.

The important thing, so far as agency executives are concerned, is the idea. They want it to be soundly practical from the homemaker's point of view, of course. But that is not enough. It must have something about it that stops the casual reader, causes her to look twice, to read, to make up her mind favorably in regard to the product featured. Those executives are concerned with sales. You must sense — and develop — that same concern.

When you, a home economist, first begin working with an advertising agency, you are not likely to be asked for your ideas on an advertisement or campaign. Instead, you probably will be told exactly what the layout and copy chiefs want from you. That holds true, ordinarily, whether

SURVEYS SHOW . . .

In magazine advertising, photographs seem to attract more attention than do other forms of art. . . . Food advertisements which feature recipes set so that they *look* like recipes attract higher readership than do food advertisements without recipes. Yes, the home economist is important in the advertising business.

you are employed full-time, or part-time as a free lance home economist or consultant.

Should you offer an idea when you have not been asked? That question cannot be answered with a blanket statement. Generally speaking, you will get along better and faster if you are not too quick in volunteering suggestions, too didactic and officious in saying just what you think ought to be done and how. Remember, copy writers and art directors are much more familiar with the techniques and the results of advertising than you — an amateur or outsider in the business — can possibly be.

DIRECTORIES

"American Business Directory" and "Trade and Professional Associations of the United States" are valuable references for analyzing the business market. Both are sold by the United States Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

It is better, usually, to proceed slowly. Prove to your employers that you can produce good recipes and photographic setups to carry out ideas originated by the creative department. If someone suggests something that you feel would be over-elaborate, or out-of-date, or otherwise impractical or unsuitable for use, don't flatly condemn it. Instead, show that you have good judgment — and good manners, too — by quietly offering another and better possibility. Prove that you can produce material that makes good selling copy and illustrations, and eventually you will find that you are being asked for ideas before a campaign is planned — at least before the copy slants and layouts are completely jelled.

You can't force yourself, can't force the recognition you desire. But you can speed it up by working to improve yourself. Here are some pointers you can follow to make yourself more valuable, less vulnerable.

1. Keep learning more and more about homemaking women and what their interests are. Keep in touch with individual homemakers — your own relatives, friends, acquaintances — and with other home economists in editorial work, extension, utility and appliance companies, and the like, who are in touch with large numbers of women.

2. Keep learning more and more about how artists and layout persons and copy creators work and think. Visit with them. Ask intelligent questions; listen intently. The better you understand their problems, the better you will be able to co-operate with them, and the less likely you are to be irked by things they do or do not do.

3. Do advance thinking about accounts on which you are working, and problems you know are coming up. Keep a growing file of ideas that you know are good from the homemaker's standpoint, and that have the makings of good selling copy and illustration.

4. Before presenting an idea, figure out what approach is best for the particular executive with whom you are working.

With some types of persons, the best way is to drop a thought casually in conversation, and see if it strikes a spark. You may not get any reaction at the moment, or ever. On the other hand, you may hear your idea brought up days or weeks later, with or without credit to you. But don't worry about credit. Just be proud if your idea is considered good enough to use.

With other types of executives, it's best to wait until you are asked for ideas. When you are, then sort out the best of those on your list and examine them closely to see that they would really sell the product. Ask yourself these questions about each one:

(a) Will this recipe or idea do a really good job for the product? If you are working on a flour advertisement, for example, does your recipe call for a reasonably large amount of flour such as for cake, pie, or rolls? Does it show off the quality of the flour to best advantage?

(b) Does the goodness of the recipe depend chiefly on the product, or is the product merely something added that can be omitted all too easily?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A great deal. Give appealing names to recipes that are to appear in advertising. Make them headlines in themselves.

(c) Is the recipe or idea in step with the times? Will everything called for in the recipe be generally available and reasonably priced at the time the advertisement appears?

(d) Will the finished dish photograph well?

(e) Is it the kind of dish that has not only those qualities that make for quick interest and appeal, but also that make for long-lasting favoritism?

WHEN IT'S DANGEROUS TO BE FANCY

When an experienced homemaker sees a picture of an ultra-fancy cake or concoction, she knows at a glance whether it is practical from her standpoint. The inexperienced homemaker lacks this background of information; lacks skills. She is more likely to try out strange ideas and is often disappointed that they do not come out as pictured. It is bad business to disappoint young homemakers, for they are forming buying habits that will stay with them for years to come.

5. Never forget that the best selling copy for any home product shows how the product is useful in solving problems for homemakers. Never forget that you are the one who must interpret those homemakers to your advertising chiefs. Never forget that such interpreting carries with it great responsibility.

The Other Side of the Picture

Some of you who read this chapter may not be home economists, but copy writers producing copy directed to homemakers. You are wondering how you can best work with a home economist to make most effective use of her training and experience.

That home economist, whether she is on the staff of your client or is working for your agency full-time or on a free-lance or consultant basis, has three things to offer you: (1) judgment; (2) skills; (3) ideas. The better use you make of all three, the more your copy is likely to appeal to and influence homemakers.

The question, of course, is how to do this. Here are recommendations offered by advertising executives and experienced home economists.

1. Make sure that you (the producer of the copy or campaign) and the home economist are visualizing the same sort of homemakers. To the home economist, the typical homemaker is a wife and mother who takes her home job rather seri-

ously. The copy writer — particularly if she is young and inexperienced — may think of homemakers as being always on the alert for something fancy and strange, rather than useful and practical. The executive is likely to have a very definite and special type of homemaker in mind, frequently represented by "*my wife*." The important thing is that the art department, copy creators, and home economist all think in terms of the same type of homemaker and of what she will be thinking and doing at the time the advertisement appears. This means building a composite picture of the homemakers to whom the advertisement is addressed.

2. Make sure that the home economist has a complete picture of the entire job, not just her part in it. Make sure she understands — and believes in — the basis of the campaign. It is not good if a home economist is asked to provide "six recipes calling for the product," with no information as to where and how those recipes are to be used. When that is the case, the home economist provides only her skills — not her full judgment or ideas.

In some cases the home economist is asked to provide ideas to fit into a copy slant or campaign which she cannot whole-heartedly accept. When that is true, perhaps the slant needs to be re-examined; perhaps it merely needs to be made more clear to the home economist. But so long as she is unconvinced as to the complete soundness of the approach, her contributions are bound to be unconvincing.

3. Go over the proposed layouts with the home economist before the layouts and copy are completely settled. Let her see exactly how much space is allowed for presenting the photographs and ideas.

Keep in mind that it is a serious mistake to try to reduce the wordage of certain recipes. Either

KNOW, DON'T GUESS

Every home economist who works with or in advertising must remember that advertising copy, even though it may seem spontaneous, has been thought through carefully, is based on facts and figures. Be prepared to back up any statements you may make when rendering an opinion on advertising approaches.

THE COPY WRITER MUST PLEASE:

His copy chief...the account executive...the agency president...the client...the client's advertising manager...the client's sales manager...the client's promotion manager...the president of the company...the factory superintendent—and the families of all concerned.

NEVER-FAIL FORMULA

Four devices that rarely fail in advertising: (1) Promise a benefit and prove it; (2) Solve a problem; (3) Put out a good idea; (4) Show someone how to use something, do something.

the dish itself must be changed, a different approach to the recipe must be taken, or the layout must be altered. Many an excellent recipe or idea has been made unintelligible — if not completely inaccurate — by trying to reduce it to too few words. Unless a recipe makes sense to the reader, it is better to use no recipe at all.

4. Think twice before you insist that the home economist carry out too literally your own personal ideas on food preparation or recipe originations. What you want from her is judgment — not blind or bland submission. Many food ideas that taste fine on paper and look fine in photographs turn out to be quite impractical from the home kitchen standpoint.

Think twice, too, before you completely rewrite the home economist's copy. If you do, you may easily alter the sense of it. Question her, of course, on anything that does not come through clearly when you read it. One of the big jobs in preparing home economics copy is to make it real and convincing. Too much fussing around on the part of the home economist, too much working over of the copy by anyone or everyone, is likely to make the words sound glib, unreal, unconvincing.

5. Remember that working triangle discussed earlier in this chapter. Work to keep it a fairly equilateral triangle, with layout department, copy writer, and home economist sharing almost equal responsibility for the finished ad.

There's a saying that no work of art is ever done by a committee. But that is not strictly true. There are many cases where a skilled copy writer, an inspired layout department, and an ideaful yet practical home economist have worked together to create advertising of triple strength and close-harmony artistry.