

In a Sceptical Age the Prize is Greater Credibility: Honest to Badness Advertising in Australia, Britain and the USA

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A series of advertisements appeared in the early 1970s which seemed to go to unusual lengths to appear credible. These ads did not attempt to make the exaggerated claims of traditional advertising, or place the product in the best possible light. The new ads tried to appear credible by using either one of two methods. The first technique was the use of a credible character speaking frankly about the product in a direct way to the consumer. The second technique involved the ad being irreverent about the product. Often the product would be made fun of so that the claims which the advertiser wanted the consumer to believe about the product would appear more credible. To appear direct and honest, some of these ads featured strikingly Australian characteristics, such as the directness of the 'ocker' character, which was exemplified by Paul Hogan in the Winfield cigarette ads. A distinctive Australian sense of humour in sending-up the product being advertised was also present in other examples, such as ads using the character Norman Gunston. Stephen Alomes and other historians of Australian popular culture have correctly placed some of these ads, namely the ocker ads, in the context of the new nationalism that came to the fore during the time of the Whitlam government.¹ However, little has apparently been done on placing these advertising formats in the context of the trends in international advertising of the time. The advertising industry in Australia in the post-second world war period was strongly influenced by American and British techniques.² It would be worthwhile to ask whether the ideas behind this apparently distinctively Australian style were part of an international trend that had swept the advertising industries of America and Britain called 'credibility' advertising?

The term credibility advertising was often used, among other names, to describe several remarkable American advertising campaigns of the 1960s that featured a different style to that of the usual exaggerated praise or puffery of a product. On occasions, because of its conspicuous difference from traditional advertising, it was also known as the 'New Advertising'.³ The techniques of credibility advertising were based upon the assumption that the public was cynical about advertising. The goal of this new form of advertising was to appear credible and honest. To do this, the advertiser was even prepared to admit to something bad about the advertised product in order to persuade the consumer to believe the rest of the advertisement. The American campaigns of this new form of advertising of the 1960s have been well documented by authors such as Robert Glatzer, Larry Dobrow, and Stephen Fox.⁴ It is instructive to review some of the notable and influential cases of the new credibility advertising in the United States before examining campaigns which were based on similar ideas, but were later tried in Britain and Australia. By the early 1970s, in the advertising industries of the United States, Britain and Australia, it was acknowledged that the shift to the new techniques first came in 1959 and 1960 with

the landmark Volkswagen ads of the then small advertising agency Doyle, Dane and Bernbach of New York.⁵

These landmark ads commenced what was referred to as ‘a creative revolution’ in American advertising partly because they were not created out of conclusions drawn from statistical research. Since its foundation in 1949, Doyle, Dane and Bernbach had told its creative department to, in the words of advertising historian Stephen Fox, ‘trust your own instincts and listen to the ideas percolating up from your unconscious’.⁶ In the 1950s and early 1960s Doyle, Dane and Bernbach stressed creativity over proven advertising formulas. Bill Bernbach remarked in 1957 that research ‘has done more to perpetuate creative mediocrity than any other factor’.⁷ The individual copy writers and art directors responsible for creating ads were given a great deal of freedom to come up with their own ideas. The Volkswagen account was an example of how Doyle, Dane and Bernbach, through its reliance upon the intuition of a few copy writers and art directors, was able to play upon consumer cynicism before it was widely revealed through surveys in the mid-1960s. Glatzer described how ‘Bernbach made an intuitive decision to turn the liability of the car’s appearance into a virtue of honesty. The only way that Bernbach felt he could sell the VW in America was as an “honest” car’.⁸ In 1959, according to George Lois, an art director at Doyle, Dane and Bernbach, the Volkswagen ‘beetle’ was still thought of as ‘the Nazi car’. Lois in his autobiography described how his colleagues at Doyle, Dane and Bernbach ‘sold the Nazi car’ by ‘junking all the rules’ of advertising. They did this by producing in 1960 a print ad that had a picture of a Volkswagen with the word ‘Lemon’ under it. This ad then went on to say that once in a while they produce a car that was a lemon, but they don’t sell them because they test all the cars before selling them, so the ‘chances are you’ll never get one of our lemons’. The ad ended by affirming that ‘We pluck the lemons; you get the plums’.⁹

This ad appeared honest because it seemed to admit something that was bad about the product. The advertising creative director Jerry Della Femina described this ad as the ‘first time an advertiser said that he was capable, on rare occasions, of turning out an inferior product. An advertiser was saying that all wasn’t fantastic in the world of business, and people took to it immediately’. Della Femina noted that ‘no one had ever called his product a lemon before’. This ad, according to Della Femina, ‘was the first time that the advertiser talked to the consumer as though he was grown up instead of a baby’. The Volkswagen ads were ‘handled in such a way that somebody was talking to the consumer in a language which the consumer was dying to hear’.¹⁰

The Volkswagen’s appearance was made fun of in its own ads (another first in American advertising). George Lois gave Julian Koenig the credit for coming up with the unflattering name ‘the beetle’ for the Volkswagen.¹¹ In the Volkswagen ads, humor was important in communicating with the consumer. Helmut Schmitz of Volkswagen of America said that his company ‘felt that people would take us more seriously if we didn’t take ourselves so seriously. We wanted to involve the reader in our ads, not lecture to him’. Some of the Volkswagen dealers initially complained that the ads didn’t say, ‘Buy one today’. The company told them that ‘every one of these ads said precisely that — without saying it once’. ‘Gradually’, Paul Lee, the advertising manager of Volkswagen of America, noted, ‘the dealers came to understand that soft-sell advertising like VW’s is extremely hard-sell advertising

after all'. 'Honest advertising sells like crazy', a Volkswagen adman commented.¹²

The sales figures of Volkswagen in the United States gave proof to the success of the new credibility advertising. In 1953, Volkswagen sold less than 1,000 cars in the United States. By 1959, Volkswagen accounted for 120,000 of the 614,000 imported cars sold in the United States. By 1962, the number of imported cars sold in the United States declined to 314,000 because of the American car companies aggressively entering the small car market. However, in that year Volkswagen increased its sales to almost 200,000. In 1967, Volkswagen accounted for 430,000 of the 700,000 imported cars sold in the United States.¹³

In 1963, Doyle, Dane and Bernbach's advertising campaign for Avis Rent-a-Car (which had slogans that were variations on the theme, 'We're No.2, so we try harder') used this same 'knocking the product' style. The campaign for Avis was also very successful (although Avis did not replace Hertz as No.1). In 1963, Avis made its first profit in fifteen years — \$1,200,000. In 1964, it made \$3 million in profit.¹⁴ In 1975, Ronald Wulkan, vice-president of Avis said that 'Avis is a company that was made by advertising'.¹⁵ At the November 1965 annual meeting of the American Association of National Advertisers, William Bernbach told advertisers that 'even knocking one's product could pay off in believability in ads'. At that time it was well recognised that Bernbach had 'parleyed a certain amount of irreverence into successful advertising'. Bernbach commented that, 'you must say things so that people feel it in their gut'.¹⁶

The success of the irreverence shown by Volkswagen and Avis ads towards their own products helped inspire other advertisers to copy them. The more established advertising agencies such as West, Weir and Bartel admitted that many of their clients were deserting them in favour of agencies that used the 'DDB look'. The first question that many potential clients of the advertising agencies of Madison Avenue were asking was 'Do you have Doyle Dane Bernbach-type ads?' By 1966, the more traditional and established agencies were described as 'scrambling for a "DDB look" — a carbon-copy cleverness'.¹⁷ Commenting upon the successful Volkswagen and Avis campaigns, Victor G. Bloede, the president of the Benton and Bowles agency in 1968, noted that 'advertising has become less shrill and demanding since 1963 and the average commercial less wordy'.¹⁸

The assumptions behind the advertising style used by copywriters and art directors at Doyle, Dane and Bernbach pre-empted many of the findings of statistical research on consumer attitudes to advertising that was conducted in the mid-1960s. These surveys confirmed their assumptions, which were then based only on intuition, about the widespread consumer cynicism towards advertising. One of the most significant studies done on the public perception of advertising in the United States in the 1960s was conducted by Professor Bauer of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. The findings were later frequently quoted by advertising agencies in not only the United States, but also in Britain and Australia as indicating what was happening in their own countries.

At the 1965, annual convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Paul C. Harper, President of Needham, Harper and Steers of Chicago, informed his colleagues that a study, conducted under the supervision of Professor Raymond Bauer, revealed that the public was only able to recall sixteen per cent of all ads.¹⁹ In 1968, Bauer, with Associate Professor Stephen A. Greyser of Harvard University, published their findings. This study was the product of four years' research,

and its conclusions drew upon the Opinion Research Corporation's survey of 1,846 people in 1964, and 524 people in 1967.²⁰ Bauer's and Greyser's figures showed that the favorable opinion that the American public had towards advertising in the 1950s (in 1959, 75 per cent of Americans liked advertising) was on the decline. In 1961, 54 per cent of Americans had a favorable opinion of advertising. By 1964, this had dropped to 41 per cent.²¹ The study also found that while 78 per cent of the American people thought advertising was essential to American life, 43 per cent believed that ads insulted the intelligence of the average consumer. While it was acknowledged in the study that this was not the first time that advertising was held in low esteem by the public, the decline in public support for advertising alarmed many in the industry.²²

To the Doyle, Dane and Bernbach agency, these statistics were a vindication of its techniques. Bill Bernbach commented that the findings of the American Association of Advertising Agencies study proved that all advertising agencies should use more creative techniques.²³ What Doyle, Dane and Bernbach had intuitively grasped about the need for advertising to address consumer cynicism in the early 1960s was orthodoxy by the late 1960s.

The Doyle, Dane and Bernbach style of advertising had a strong influence over the ads of the 1960s in not only the United States, but also in Britain. The application of credibility advertising to the British market provides a good example of how an American agency was able to transfer the techniques with few changes. The style proved an enduring one. The British advertising industry magazine *Campaign* in its survey of British ads during June 1972 noted that many agencies were still following what it referred to as the 'knocking the product' style, which it added was traceable back to the 'landmark' Volkswagen ads. *Campaign* reported that it all began when Bernbach 'stripped away the superfluous graphics in his ads — even more daring folks! — he began to tell the truth about the products he advertised'.²⁴

The first slogan that Doyle, Dane and Bernbach created for Volkswagen in Britain was 'slow, ugly, noisy and expensive' in 1967. 'A lot of people in the business were horrified', remarked Alan Dix, the managing director of Volkswagen in Britain. He explained that 'we went on to show that while the headline had a grain of truth, it was by no means the whole story'. The 'important thing was that people read the headline'.²⁵ *Campaign* remarked that in Britain this 'truth in advertising approach turned advertising on its ear'. It became customary to engage in 'knocking the product', and to use 'a stark visual' with minimal and direct sentences.²⁶ In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Volkswagen sales in Britain rose, and Doyle, Dane and Bernbach's branch in Britain expanded.

In Britain, these new credible ads which Volkswagen had started were commonly referred to as 'honest-to-badness' advertising. This style of campaign had become prominent in British advertising by 1969. In December 1969, Winston Fletcher, the director of the Waddicors and Clark Wilkinson agency, told the readers of the current affairs magazine, *New Society*, that 'if you've been watching independent television lately you may have noticed a number of disarmingly self-critical commercials'. Among many examples, he mentioned the commercial for Benson and Hedges Special Pantellas cigars 'in which these cigars are described as looking mottled and odd — but the commercial goes on to say "we sell on taste not looks"'. Fletcher outlined the strategy of these ads. 'Having been candid about something that's wrong with his product, in a forthright let's-all-be-realistic-and-sensible-about-this

kind of way', Fletcher explained, 'the advertiser hopes that you will believe he is being equally honest about what's right with the product'. He observed that 'the dedicated supporters of the school take the argument still further' when they 'argue that as the level of education steadily increases, and as consumers become more sophisticated about the products they buy, they will get progressively more tired of superlatives, generalisations and platitudes with which all too much advertising is stuffed'.²⁷

The transfer of the techniques of credibility advertising to Britain was not without some problems. Fletcher described how the style had been used ineptly in Britain for the launch of the Austin Maxi car. It is interesting to compare the ads for the British Austin Maxi car with how Doyle, Dane and Bernbach handled its subtle send-ups of the Volkswagen. The British advertising industry applied the same techniques to a motor vehicle, but could not reproduce the subtleties. The copy lines asked, 'What's so new about the Austin Maxi?' The answer followed: 'Every car advertisement tells you that it has the best engine, gearbox, comfort, roadholding, boot space, etc. possible. So maybe the Maxi won't impress you'. The ad went through the features of the car, making them sound boring. 'What's so new about a new engine? Cars have had them before... What's so new about economy gearing? Every car promises better performance ... What's so new about big boots? Every car promises an enormous boot'. It finally finished with, 'Will you like the Maxi? We don't have a clue'.

The new 'honest-to-badness' advertising was the advertising agencies' answer to the criticisms of advertising that were coming from consumer advocates, who protested that advertising did not inform the consumer honestly. Winston Fletcher had remarked in *New Society* in December 1969 on how similar some of these new ads were to the consumer reports done on products by magazines such as *Which?* of the British Consumers' Association. He called these ads the 'British-knockers', which were 'coming thick and fast'. Fletcher singled out as an example the ad for Unilever's Astral skin cream which 'promises to tell "The Truth" about magic moisture cream ingredients'. Fletcher saw it as 'an advertisement full of *Which?* like copy'. He described how 'Astral explains that no skin creams can remove lines and wrinkles'. The ad finished with the refrain that, 'unfortunately we still can't promise you the elixir of youth, but our researchers are still looking for the magic ingredient that will keep those ugly lines away forever. As soon as we find it we'll let you know'. The ad seemed to be saying, according to Fletcher, 'meanwhile you might as well use Astral as anything else'. Ads like this verged on not fulfilling what the advertising industry saw as the function of advertising, which was to persuade the consumer to buy the product.

The objective that many British advertisers were striving for was summed up by a creative director writing for the trade journal of the British advertising industry *Campaign* in March 1973: 'in a sceptical age the prize is greater credibility'.²⁸ The consumer, suffering from 'a sensory overload', had learned to recognise the claims and exaggerations of advertising, and blocked out most ads. 'Our internal radar has become so finely tuned that only something which gives signs of being really relevant gets through', remarked a creative director writing for *Campaign*. He claimed that ads which told the consumer that 'you are not the only person in the world to feel this way' would succeed through what he called the 'Trojan horse principle' — 'what does get through often doesn't get its passport examined'. He gave as an

example the print ads for Birds Eye vegetables which had the slogan 'Now there's a vegetable for husbands who'd rather eat dessert'. These ads, he wrote, recognised that 'vegetables are good, alright. But they're not special, or interesting'. The creative director acknowledged that because 'over the years we've grown more cynical' to 'promise too much is to end up empty-handed'.²⁹

In the early 1970s, there emerged strong statistical evidence that the British industry was indeed advertising in a 'sceptical age'. Prompted by the American survey results on the level of consumer cynicism towards ads, the British advertising industry conducted its own surveys in the early 1970s. These attested to a similar trend occurring in the attitudes of British consumers. In November 1972, the British Advertising Association's survey, *Public Attitudes to Advertising*, demonstrated 'a sharp decline in the number of people who approve of advertising'. In 1972, only 67 per cent of those surveyed approved of advertising, compared to 79 per cent in 1969. In the same period, the number of people who believed that advertising misleads more than doubled from 10 per cent to 23 per cent. Only 10 per cent strongly agreed that advertising presented a true picture of products, and more than 50 per cent either did not bother with ads or actively disliked them. Rosemary McRobert, a consumer representative from the Consumers' Association, remarked that, 'it confirms the impression I get, particularly among the young people, that there is now far more cynicism and scepticism about advertising'.³⁰ In 1975, a National Opinion Polls Market Research study showed that over half of the people surveyed thought that 'ads did not tell the truth'.³¹

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Doyle, Dane and Bernbach's approach to advertising was transferred to Britain. The formats of the credibility ads in Britain corresponded closely to similar styles in the United States. This was due in part to the same advertising agency that initiated the 'creative revolution' in the United States, Doyle, Dane and Bernbach commencing a similar phenomenon in the British advertising industry through its London branch.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, Australian advertising executives, after coming back from study trips to see the techniques of their American and British colleagues, warned that just as the American and British agencies had undergone a creative revolution, it was time for this to happen in Australia.³² Advertising executives visiting Australia from the United States were repeating the same message: accept credibility advertising.³³

Yet the Doyle, Dane and Bernbach style of advertising, while having considerable impact on the American and Britain advertising agencies, did not have a commensurate influence on the Australian industry. This may be attributed partly to the Australian branch of Volkswagen not making use of its 'knocking' the product style that it had used in the United States and Britain. Its advertising account remained at Berry Currie, a local Australian agency, in Sydney. In 1973, Bill Currie, the managing director of this advertising agency, commenting upon the Doyle, Dane Bernbach advertising formats for Volkswagen in the United States and Britain, remarked that he 'would like to be able to use a lot more of their stuff, because it's so brilliant, but the markets they are selling into, and the model mix in the US and the UK are so completely different from Australia, that it is rarely possible'. The heavily protected car market in Australia meant that comparatively few foreign cars could be imported. Bill Currie argued that 'with a limited number of cars to be sold, VW advertising adopts a rather different approach'. Volkswagen advertising in Australia

did not 'knock' the car but merely stressed 'reliability and durability'.³⁴ Thus the influence of the Doyle, Dane and Bernbach 'look' through the Volkswagen advertisements, which had been crucial in encouraging the British industry to copy this style, was absent from the Australian industry.

The ideas behind credibility advertising were transferred to Australia, but their application to the Australian market resulted in different formats. Instead of using the 'knocking' the product style, some Australian advertising agencies took what was called the 'direct' approach with consumers in order to appear credible. In Australia, the need to be seen as honest started off in the early 1970s with a laughable extreme. To gain credibility for the Norman Ross discount chain, a local Australian advertising agency SPASM, headed by John Singleton, hired three clergymen to pitch the message. The commercial ended with the clergymen saying, 'the offers of Norman Ross are genuine. I wouldn't do their commercials if they weren't'. Robin Wight, the creative director of the London office of Euro Advertising described, in his book, *The Day the Pigs Refused to be Driven to the Market*, SPASM's strategy as hiring a 'high-credibility source to deliver your message'.³⁵

In order to make their ads appear more credible Australian advertising agencies in the early 1970s introduced distinctively Australian characters into their ads. They dropped personalities that were frequently described as originating from 'some sort of bland hybrid of Britain and the United States'.³⁶ To be seen to be speaking directly to their audience, advertisers began to use Australians who were cut from the what came to be called the ocker mould of the Australian national character. These characters' drawl, laconic speech, with down-to-earth plain-talking humility reflected the image that many Australians had of themselves.

The most successful personality of this type was Paul Hogan, who appeared in the Winfield cigarette television ads from 1972 to 1975. Dressed in a shirt with the sleeves pulled off and in ordinary short work pants and work boots, Hogan looked as if he had walked straight off a construction site to do his comedy appearances on television. In fact, Hogan had been working as a painter on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. In contrast to his other television appearances, when he did his cigarette commercials, Hogan was initially pictured in a tuxedo, but still retained many of the ocker characteristics in his speech and mannerisms. Prior to Hogan, cigarettes were usually endorsed by slick, sophisticated, and successful looking characters. This send-up appealed to many Australians. The Winfield brand of cigarettes increased in sales dramatically.³⁷

'The Winfield campaign is a prime example both of daring and the new directness', wrote Leo Schofield in the *Broadcasting and Television Weekly*, the main trade journal of the Australian advertising industry. Schofield was critical of replicating the subtleties of the new style of advertising from the United States and he believed that the use of the local vernacular, which emphasised directness and plain speaking, would be better to gain greater credibility amongst consumers. 'We should be talking to them in language they understand, not in some hip patois that might possibly be comprehend by 3.7% of the populace', Schofield remarked. He concluded that 'it's time we got out from Uncle Sam's shadow and started not only to think for ourselves, but to write for ourselves'. The ocker ads had a wide appeal because of their irreverence and humorous take-offs. They thus marked a 'creative revolution' in Australian advertising. Schofield wrote, 'I have no doubt that in the heady days of the late 60s it would have been an impossible task to persuade that company to run

those ads'.³⁸

In Australia, as in the United States, the need to appear credible was sensed intuitively by a few advertising executives: there was no statistical research done to prove the need for credibility advertising. By replacing the formats that Australian advertisers usually copied from the United States with their own distinctively Australian formats, these local agencies were appealing to feelings in Australian society that they sensed, and that were unquantifiable.

The Australian advertising agencies that used the ocker ads believed that they were in tune with the emerging nationalism of the 1970s. Richard Young, of the Australian advertising agency, Quinlan, Mitchell, Malanot and Scott wrote in 1976 that 'Ockerism grew to fever pitch when the Whitlam government set about whipping up a blatant nationalism'. Young noted that the Whitlam government's attempts to have a distinctively Australian national anthem, and the 'financing of domestic arts and artists made Australians proud to be Australian'. 'The fact is, the ocker commercial had to happen because in this country, from the early '70s, it became fashionable to be Australian'.³⁹ The creators of the Winfield ads, Jim Walpole and George Johnston, of Hertz Walpole, a local Australian agency, noted that in 1972, 'Australians' attitudes to themselves and their place in the world' were 'very relevant to the approach we took with Winfield'. Speaking on other ocker campaigns they had run, Walpole and Johnston commented that 'each campaign is different, of course, but as far as we can, our approach is try to strike a chord of Australianness'.⁴⁰ Greg Warner, from, SPASM, believed that ocker ads had great appeal because they were 'showing Australians being themselves for a change'.⁴¹

The ocker character was prompted by both the need for advertising to appear credible and the agencies sensing the rise of a distinctively Australian form of nationalism. Richard Young, of Quinlan, Mitchell, Malanot and Scott, concluded that 'the ocker symbolised the new nationalism. If he said a product was okay, then it had to be okay, mate'. Young added that 'the ironic thing about the fashion of Ockerism on TV is the two people who were really responsible — Gough Whitlam and John Singleton'.⁴²

John Singleton, who created many of the early ocker commercials, became the managing director of Doyle, Dane and Bernbach — the very agency that had initiated and help spread the new credibility advertising. The directness and credibility of the ocker characters were similar to the basic assumptions behind the ideas of this new form of advertising, although the style was different. Singleton criticised advertising executives who advocated applying unchanged the tactics of the American campaigns to Australia. 'Their idea of a successful ad is that it's just come out of New York', he said. He claimed that 'ocker ads worked because they identified with the basic Australian'. Singleton expressed his firm belief that 'Australians have always had their own inherent nature; their common way of talking'.⁴³

Singleton was an advocate of the new ideas of credibility advertising. He announced in 1974 that 'the chances of even making a living will disappear for most of the traditional agencies because there is no place in the future for traditional advertising'. He revealed that the industry had 'used advertising not to inform but to persuade, con, and lie to the public that their product, which really was exactly the same as the one next door and the one down the road was in fact, whiter, brighter, faster, slower or whatever the persuaders believed the people would believe'. The public, he said, had become more cynical about the claims of advertisers. Singleton

said that credibility advertising would be accepted by the public because it appeared to inform the consumer, and refrained from making obviously exaggerated claims.

‘Advertising will tell people about the product and it will again be believed’, he said. ‘The future of the advertising business is just that simple’.⁴⁴

Despite not being able to replicate the Doyle, Dane and Bernbach formats, some Australian agencies did introduce into their own ads some of the irreverence of the send-up the product approach of those American ads. In Australia, a few ads, like the ocker ads, were conceived as spoofs or parodies of advertising. These ads were send-ups, not of the product being advertising, but of the symbols of American advertising culture.

One of the most successful spoofs was done by a deodorant company that did a take-off of the American recruiting ad, ‘Uncle Sam Needs You’. Samuel Taylor released on to the Australian market in 1974 a deodorant called ‘Uncle Sam’. The product development and promotion was done by the Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann-Erickson agency. Their market research had shown them that although males and females aged sixteen to twenty-four were the heaviest users of deodorants ‘nothing on the Australian market was specifically advertised to them, in their idiom’. The agency recognised that this was ‘no easy target market, because of its individualism, cynicism, radicalism and anti-establishment attitudes. It was easily the most sceptical about product claims’.⁴⁵

The spray can of Uncle Sam was packaged in red, white, and blue stars and stripes. The Uncle Sam character was pictured in a take-off of the war poster ‘Uncle Sam Needs You’. This was turned around with a young man as the Uncle Sam character wearing a top hat covered in the stars and stripes. Uncle Sam had lanky long hair, wore an incongruous pair of sun glasses, and pointed his index finger at the viewer. The slogan was reversed to become ‘You Need Uncle Sam’, with a picture of the deodorant next to Uncle Sam’s index finger. Leonard Blanket, who worked in the Australian advertising industry, wrote in the journal of the American advertising industry, the *Advertising Age*, that, ‘the qualitative research by the agency showed the target market welcomed the directness and humor of the poster’s interpretation and copy line’.

The Uncle Sam campaign was described by *Broadcasting and Television Weekly* as ‘attracting attention and affection among the younger generation for such gentle send-ups as an animated Statue of Liberty helping her underarm to a generous whoosh of spray deodorant’. The ads included a backing jingle with ‘easy to remember words and hummable tune’.⁴⁶ The creator of the infectious jingle, John Gillard described how the television campaign was ‘based on a jingle and a visual send-up situation’.⁴⁷ Ian Fawne-Mead, creative director of Hansen-Rubensohn-McCann-Erickson, saw the ad as ‘an aggressive spoof which disguises hard sell as comedy’.⁴⁸ The brand went from nothing to number two in the Australian deodorant market. Susan Chadwick, a copywriter for Melbourne Advertising Associates, observed that until Uncle Sam, ‘armpits haven’t really been fun before. They’ve been disgusting, offensive, embarrassing, sexy — but never good old musical comedy fun’. Chadwick added that, ‘I don’t think any one believes they’ll get anything but average deodorant performance from “Uncle Sam” — they just like the ads’.⁴⁹

Another spoof featured the television actor and comedian Garry MacDonald’s Norman Gunston character, a figure who, like the ocker characters, was associated

with being identifiably Australian. In 1975, Rothmans used the character of Norman Gunston to sell its new cigarette, Dukes. The theme for Dukes was a western setting, and the slogan was 'Long And Lean and Easy on the Draw'. However, the advertising agency Hertz Walpole, which had pioneered many of the ocker spoofs, parodied the traditional approach. They placed on a horse in a western setting, Norman Gunston. He was described by the correspondent for the *Advertising Age*, as looking like 'something out of "The Munsters", with thinning hair pasted down on his forehead, a pancake-white face and shaving cuts covered with paper'. This mismatch was a bizarre parody of the Marlboro man ads. The correspondent for the *Advertising Age* described it as 'a spoof by a leading tobacco company on all cigaret advertising'.⁵⁰

The international trend of credibility advertising provides the context of the 'creative revolution' in the Australian advertising industry during the 1970s, when Australian ads reflected the new nationalism of the time. The ideas behind credibility advertising had a persistent influence over the formats that advertising agencies in the United States, Britain, and Australia were using. However, this did not mean that there was uniformity in styles across all three countries. While the British industry felt confident enough to reproduce the formats of the Doyle, Dane and Bernbach ads, the Australian advertising industry did not feel that the subtleties of gently talking down the product, which worked well in the United States and Britain, would succeed in Australia. Therefore, they adopted a more direct approach in their formats. This demonstrates that advertising agencies in Australia were conscious of the differences in the popular culture between Australia, Britain, and the United States.

Endnotes

- 1 Stephen Alomes and Catherine Jones, (eds.), *Australian Nationalism: A Documentary History*, North Ryde, 1991, p. 355; Stephen Alomes, *A Nation At Last?*, North Ryde, 1988, p. 271; and Peter Spearritt and David Walker, *Australian Popular Culture*, Sydney, 1979, pp. 190-209.
- 2 See Kevin Blackburn, 'The "Consumers' Ethic" of Australian Advertising Agencies 1950-1965', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 32, March 1992, pp. 60-75.
- 3 Robert Glatzer, *New Advertising: The Great Campaigns from Avis to Volkswagen*, New York, 1970.
- 4 Glatzer, *op.cit.*, Larry Dobrow, *When Advertising Tried Harder: The Sixties, The Golden Age of American Advertising*, New York, 1984; and Stephen Fox, *Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators*, New York, 1984.
- 5 Robert Glatzer, *op.cit.*; 'VW's advertising milestone has a lot to answer for', *Campaign*, 16 June 1972, pp. 15-16, and 'Introducing the new bug', *Broadcasting and Television Weekly*, 12 April 1973, p. 47.
- 6 Fox, *op.cit.*, p. 252
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Glatzer, *op.cit.*, p. 23.
- 9 See George Lois, *George, Be Careful*, New York, 1972.
- 10 Jerry Della Femina, *From Those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbour*, (an advertising slogan that he once jokingly suggested for selling National Panasonic television sets), New York, 1970.
- 11 See Lois, *op.cit.*
- 12 W.H. Nelson, *Small Wonder: The Amazing Story of Volkswagen*, New York, 1967, p. 233 and p. 237.
- 13 See Nelson, *op.cit.*, p.37; and Glatzer, *op.cit.*, p. 30.
- 14 Glatzer, *op.cit.*, p. 70.

- 15 'Avis is a company that was made by advertising', *Advertising Age*, 1 December 1975, p. 9.
- 16 'Advertising: Illusions Are Made to Order', *New York Times*, 18 June 1965, p. 69.
- 17 'Advertising: More Debate Over DDB Look', *New York Times*, 6 April 1966, p. 66.
- 18 'Irreverent Revolution', *New York Times*, 6 September 1968, p. 71
- 19 'Admen Study: Study on Public', *New York Times*, 24 April 1965, p. 38.
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- 21 Raymond A. Bauer and Stephen A. Greyser, *Advertising in America: The Consumer View*, Boston, 1968, p. 70.
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