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**THE FIRST TECHNIQUE  
OF BREAKTHROUGH COPY:  
INTENSIFICATION**

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**Thirteen Ways to Strengthen Desire**

The force that creates sales, that powers our present economy, is desire. Mass Desire, spread among millions of men and women. And the art of salesmanship, fundamentally and primarily, is expanding this desire. Expanding it horizontally, among more and more people. Expanding it vertically, by sharpening and magnifying it—by building it to such a pitch that it overcomes the obstacles of skepticism, lethargy and price, and results in the sale.

Advertising is salesmanship in print. Therefore, above everything else, advertising is the literature of desire. It is society's encyclopedia of dreams . . . our twentieth-century Wish Book. Advertising gives form and content to desire. It provides it with a goal.

These desires, as they exist in the mind of your prospect today, are indistinct. They are blurs—hazy, ambiguous, not yet

crystallized into words or images. In most cases, they are simply vague emotions, without compulsion or direction. And as such, they have only a fraction of their true potential power.

*Your job is to fill out these vague desires with concrete images—to show your prospect every possible way that they can be fulfilled—to multiply their strength by the number of satisfactions that you can suggest to achieve them.*

A copy writer's first qualifications are imagination and enthusiasm. You are literally the script writer for your prospect's dreams. You are the chronicler of his future. Your job is to show him in minute detail all the tomorrows that your product makes possible for him.

This is the core of advertising—its fundamental function. To take unformulated desire, and translate it into one vivid scene of fulfillment after another. To add the appeal of concrete satisfaction after satisfaction to the basic drive of that desire. To make sure that your prospect realizes everything that he is getting—everything that he is now leaving behind him—everything that he may possibly be missing.

The sharper you can draw your pictures—and the greater the number of them that you can legitimately present—the more your prospect will demand your product, and the less important will seem your price.

How much space can you give to this process of Intensification? This depends on two factors—the amount of space allotted to you for the entire ad, and the number of ways you can present your images without giving the feeling of repetition or boredom.

First of all, different media demand different treatments. For example, catalogs, small-space newspaper and magazine advertising, radio and television strictly limit the number of words given to you to draw your images. To fit your message into their structures, you must use either or both of two techniques. The first is *compression*—the boiling down of projections and images into a few key words. And the second is *the campaign*—the repetition of these key words over and over again—along with a

progression of embellishments and differentiations—through an entire series of advertisements.

We shall see how this is done, in detail, at the end of this chapter.

On the other hand, large-space newspaper and magazine advertising and especially direct mail give you adequate room, in most cases, to present a full story. In these media, the decision as to length depends far more on the second factor—*the number of ways you can present your images without giving the feeling of repetition or boredom.*

No matter what you do, your prospect will take with him only one basic idea, one dominant image from your ad. But with every additional new and different way that you can present that idea, it becomes sharper and more real in your prospect's mind, and it builds up more and more emotional weight.

Thus the problem becomes one of perspective, of fresh viewpoints, of new and different detail. Of walking around your product in your imagination, and presenting it to your prospect in every way in which it enters his life.

You are working against two opposing forces. The first, as in your headline, is the amount of material which has already been presented to your prospect about similar products in other ads. There are stages of market sophistication to be dealt with in body copy as well as in your headline. If your prospect has read the same phraseology before, he will be bored by it, no matter where he encounters it again.

And the second obstacle is the phraseology of your own ad. Once you have presented your basic fulfillment in a certain way, *then you must vary your viewpoint in your second description*, or not present it again. Otherwise you will lose your reader in the middle of your ad.

You cannot repeat, but you can reinforce. And every time the same basic promise is given a fresh setting for your prospect, it reinforces the descriptions that went before it, and makes your prospect that much more determined to participate.

The presenting of a series of fresh, new and different fulfillments for your prospect's dominant desire—our first mechanism of persuasion—is called Intensification. It takes many forms, with many more certainly to be invented. We will list some of them here, giving the complete copy examples to show how they have been worked out to deal with specific copy problems.

Our illustrations in this part of the book will be drawn mostly from mail order. The reason for this is simple. Mail order advertising must accomplish its sale from a single ad, without relying on the cumulative force of the campaign, and without help from product display or salespeople. Therefore, mail order tries to present as much of the complete story as possible at one time. These same techniques apply equally well to all forms of advertising. But there they are usually quite compressed, and their purpose and structure was not quite so apparent.

Here are these techniques of Intensification:

### **Your First Presentation of Your Claims**

1. *First present the product or the satisfaction it gives directly—bluntly—by a thorough, completely detailed description of its appearance or the results it gives.* For example, this rose ad:

#### **MORE ROSES THAN YOU EVER SAW ON ANY ROSE BUSH . . .**

Leading Eastern Agricultural College reports: This fabulous rose variety produced 500 blooms in June . . . 1523 more blooms in July . . . 1616 more blooms in August . . . 437 more blooms in September . . . *4,076 roses all from one single plant . . .*

Can you imagine the fantastic beauty of a rosebush that can easily give you MORE THAN 4,000 ROSES from June to September—and then keeps on blooming heavily right up into frost . . .

Can you imagine the fantastic thrill of walking into your garden and actually picking 3 dozen, even 4 dozen

roses a day from a single plant, day after day, week after week—and still leave gigantic clusters of bloom on each single plant.

Colorful, fragrant roses almost as large as the most expensive Hybrid Teas, yet blooming by the hundreds at one single time . . . on one single bush! Cherry-pink 3-inch roses overlaid with tinges of red that deepen in fire and brilliance as the blossoms unfold—to reveal a dazzling gold splash on their petals! Roses that burst into living walls of blossoms that flame again and again into exquisite masses of bloom in June, July, August, September, October, November . . . and often stay in bloom weeks after the first snows have fallen! . . .

This is the rose with such fantastic blooming power that it will actually give you huge clusters of 10, 12 even 15 flowers on a single stem . . . and produce those clusters in solid masses of bloom! Clusters as large as both of your outstretched hands put together . . . clusters that actually measure up to one full foot across . . . each stem a complete floral bouquet in itself . . . that gives you an average of more than 50 NEW ROSES day after day, week after week, for 8, 9 even 10 weeks in a row during the hot “dog days” of summer . . . Enough roses to fill every room in your house with color and fragrance all summer long . . . Enough roses to drench your terrace with beauty, to sweep around your home and flood your beds, your borders, your walks, your driveway with solid, living walls of roses all summer long . . . with just a few plants!

And this is the rose you can have blooming in your garden now and for years to come, that will make your grounds the garden showplace of the neighborhood, if you accept this extraordinary flower offer now! . . .

Or, as another example, this description of the results of a Christmas flashlight projector that shows colored slides of the Bible:

. . . You take out the amazing invention we send you. You simply switch it on. *And suddenly every person in the room draws in his breath in excitement and admiration!*

For there before you on that living room wall—projected four feet wide by three feet tall—is one of the most beautiful pictures you have ever seen! Before your eyes—so real that you can practically reach out and touch her—is the Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus in her arms. The picture actually glows with exquisite color. You can see every magnificent detail . . . the animals huddled around the manger . . . the tenderness in the Virgin's eyes . . . the smile on the Infant's face.

It's almost as though you were actually there! Suddenly all the wonderful tales your children have heard . . . all the meaning and glory of Christmas . . . come alive before your children's eyes! Life-sized . . . as tall as your children . . . scene after scene parades before them on their living room wall! They actually see the Angel of God announcing the Birth to the Shepherds! They witness the Star of Bethlehem rising over the world! They stand side by side with the Three Wise men in silent adoration!

Before their very eyes, they see Christ grow to maturity. They watch him astound the elders of the Temple as a small child. They thrill to his first meeting with John the Baptist. They are present at the Sermon on the Mount. They witness each of the miracles—see with their own eyes Jesus calming the storm . . . teaching Peter to walk on the water . . . raising Lazarus from the dead.

*Can there be any more thrilling experience?* Suddenly every sermon they have ever heard . . . every book they have ever read . . . every prayer they have ever learned, takes on new meaning and beauty for them. This is probably the most thrilling hour you will ever spend with your children. They will ask you to repeat it time and time again. These magnificent pictures will continue to thrill and astound and instruct them for years to come . . .

Or, as another example, this description of the outward appearance of a giant flying plastic model jet:

. . . Yes! Just imagine the expression on your children's faces, when they walk into your living room just one week from today, and suddenly see this magnificent model airplane standing in front of them on the living room table!

Here is a gigantic, three-dimensional, all plastic model airplane—resting securely on its own triple landing gear—and so huge that its tail section alone stands six full inches from the table!

This magnificent model airplane proudly bears the official colors of Pan American Airways! Its wings and engines are a dazzling silver! Its fuselage is a gleaming white—with a brilliant blue stripe stretching back twenty-one inches along the entire length of the body! And stamped on both sides of the huge rudder is the Pan American World Globe—and the American flag above it, ready to identify this plane anywhere she goes!

Both the wings and the tail section are slanted diagonally back—ready to cut through the air at 600 scale miles an hour! And suspended beneath the wings are the four huge engines—each as long and as thick as your child's fingers—each with its own JET SOUND SIMULATOR, to give your child thrill after thrill after thrill WHEN HE ACTUALLY FLIES THIS BREATH-TAKING MODEL HIMSELF! . . .

### **Put the Claims in Action**

2. *Now that you have presented your main description, you are ready to expand the image. One of the most effective ways to do this is to PUT THE PRODUCT IN ACTION for your reader. To show, not only how the product looks, and what benefits it gives the reader, but exactly how it does this. As one example, let's continue with our model jet airplane ad:*

No Fuel! No Danger! No Crack-Ups! Yet It Flies 600 Scale Miles An Hour, All Under Your Complete Control!

Pick this magnificent plastic model up from the table, and hand it to your child. While he holds it, simply attach the U-Control Line as we show you to the left wing. Then suspend the model from this control line, and begin slowly to swing it through the air. Before your astonished eyes, you will see one of the most thrilling sights of your entire life!

This model is perfectly designed for high-speed flight! As soon as it picks up power from the motion of your hand, it will lift up its nose, its wings will begin to cut through the air, it will flash upward and streak ahead of you! As you give it more and more line, it will turn wider and wider, fly faster and faster . . . You can fly it in circles only five feet wide, or you can take it outdoors and fly it in gigantic arcs one hundred feet wide—the size of an entire city lot . . .

You can make this plane soar upward—stall at fantastic heights—dive toward the ground—and then pick up speed and flash upward again in a breath-taking rescue! . . . You can spiral this magnificent model down into a perfect landing! You can fly two or more planes in formation! You can have jet races! You can have an entire fleet of breath-taking models flown by every member of your family—and you can have them for only \$1 apiece—less than ONE-FIFTH the price you'd pay for a plastic model of this size and performance! . . .

Or, as another example, this product-in-action description from a brochure selling a self-propelled fish lure:

. . . Think of it! To fuel up this amazing, live-action lure, all you do is this. Simply snap open the fuel chamber—pour in the absolutely harmless fuel—and close the fuel chamber again! . . . Simply cast or lower that power-packed lure into fresh or salt water—and get set for the fishing thrill of your life!

For perhaps one minute, the lure will float quietly on the surface of the water. But then that water will reach the fuel charge inside—the lure will seem to shudder for a second—and then it will spring dramatically to “life”!

The air around it will be filled with the buzzing sound of a dying bee! Instantly, the nose of the lure will point downward, and it will begin its first descent! Slowly, jerkily, like a maimed minnow, it will swim noisily downward—buzzing and humming—traveling about nine feet every fifteen seconds! If no fish intercepts it, it will then automatically stop its descent—slowly raise up its nose—and begin its irresistible climb to the surface again!

And again! And again! Tirelessly—hour after hour—lengthening out the reach of your own casts! Roaming restlessly over every foot of water beneath you—even on a slack line—even when your boat is tied up—even when you're curled up on the dock, sound asleep! . . .

And driving the fish around you into such a frenzy with its swimming and its buzzing that they practically tear the rod out of your hands—they're so anxious to get their mouths into the hook! . . .

### **Bring In the Reader**

3. Or, if your product lends itself to this kind of treatment, *put your reader right smack in the middle of this product-in-action story, and give him a verbal demonstration of what will happen to him the first day he owns that product.* For example, this passage from an ad selling a power booster for the average car:

. . . Picture this to yourself! Next weekend you go down to your car—the same tired car that you've been driving for years. You've made only one simple change to that car, so easy that your sixteen year old son could do it. But now, when you turn on the ignition, a modern miracle of engineering science comes to life under your hood!

From the very first moment, you'll see and feel the difference in that engine! . . . When you release the emergency brake, your car will glide out of its parking space—roll down the street with your foot hardly touching the gas pedal. Every 30 or 40 seconds, you'll give that car an extra shot of gas—feeling it spurt ahead—testing the new power that's singing underneath your foot!

We ask you to pull up to another car at the stop light, of approximately the same year and make as your own! Wait until the light changes from red to green. Let the other car start first. Wait till the other car gets half way across the street. And then slam your foot down on the gas pedal!

Before that other car has even crossed the street, you will have caught up with him. For one brief second, you and that other car will race fender to fender. And then you

will flash away from him . . . you will leave him a full block behind . . . you will look in your rear view mirror and see the startled look of amazement on the other driver's face! . . .

### **Show Him How to Test Your Claims**

4. But there is still more room to expand the image along these lines. *Turn the demonstration into a test. Let your reader visualize himself proving the performance of your product—gaining its benefits immediately—in the most specific and dramatic way possible.* For example, in this ad, selling a new kind of spark plug:

. . . when you get your set of SA FIRE INJECTORS, here is all you do. If you have an automatic transmission, make a note of how fast your car crawls forward when it is in the drive position, with the motor idling. If you have a sports car, a racing car or boat, make a note of the RPM's as indicated on the tachometer when the engine is idling. If you have regular transmission, put your car in low gear on a level road and notice its speed with the motor idling. Next . . . screw your injectors right into the spark plug openings . . .

Now, if you have an automatic transmission—put your car in drive and let your engine idle. If your car stood still with spark plugs, it will now move forward at from 4 to 6 miles an hour; that means that the amount of gas that just kept your engine turning over will now carry you up to 6 miles at no cost to you.

If you have a racing or sports car or a boat with a tachometer, your RPM's will increase up to 200 more at idling and up to 300 more at high speeds.

If you have regular transmission, in low gear with your motor idling your car will move forward 4 to 6 miles per hour faster. In other words, no matter what you drive, here is absolute proof that you can go further, faster and cheaper . . .

Or, as another example, this demonstration-test from an ad selling a memory course, with the headline, “Give Me One Evening and I’ll Give you a Push-Button Memory”:

. . . Take this book and turn to page 39. Read eight short pages—no more. And then, put down the book. Review in your own mind the one simple secret I’ve shown you. And then—get ready to test your new AUTOMATIC memory!

What you are going to do, in that very first evening, is this. Without referring to the book, you are going to sit down, and you are going to write—not five, not ten, but TWENTY important facts that you have never been able to memorize before! If you are a business man, they may be customers’ orders that you have received . . . if you are a salesman, they may be twenty different products in your line . . . if you are a housewife, they. . .

In any case, you are simply going to glance over that list again for a few moments. You are going to perform a simple mental trick on each one of these facts—that will burn that fact into your mind, permanently and automatically! And then you are going to put that list away . . .

And the next morning, you are going to amaze your friends and family! When you go down to business, you will attend to everyone of those orders—automatically—without referring to your memo pad! . . .

Yes! And you’ll amaze your friends by remembering every product in your line—backwards and forwards—in the exact order that you memorized them! You’ll keep every single appointment on time—because one appointment will automatically flash into your mind after another—at the precise moment you need them—exactly as though you pushed a mental button!

All this—in a single evening! . . .

### **Stretch Out Your Benefits in Time**

5. The number of variations, of fresh, startling viewpoints is endless. Here is another departure from the product-in-action theme: showing the product at work, not for just an hour or a

day, but over a span of weeks and months. Here you extend your reader's vision further and further into time—showing him a continuous flow of benefits. This passage is taken from an ad for an English plant food:

. . . First, the amazing English pellets give your plants a tremendous new burst of growth! New plants and old—they send out dozens of hidden shoots and buds! Some of your plants may actually DOUBLE in height and breadth the very first month!

But this is just the beginning! Within one or two short weeks—without your even touching your plant—this amazing pellet AUTOMATICALLY begins the second stage of its work! It automatically sends out a second wonder-working nutrient—that enters into every cell of your plants' bodies—that fills those cells with health and strength and sturdiness . . . Great, tall stems stand up with military precision! Giant buds begin to swell with vigor and vitality! Even tired old shrubs and trees—that you had almost given up for lost—begin to straighten out—fatten up—send out the young green growth that you had never hoped to see again!

And then, the most remarkable part of all! Just as these fantastically beautiful plants have reached their full, glorious height and strength—at that moment these tiny English pellets automatically liberate still a third wonder-working ingredient! . . .

And when that third precious ingredient reaches those buds—then that very morning you will open the door to your house—AND YOU WILL BE BLINDED BY THE EXPLOSION OF COLOR THAT GREETES YOU IN YOUR GARDEN! . . . You will see rose bushes weighted down with masses of blossoms, of a richness and perfume and color you have never imagined before! You will see dahlias and asters and gladiolas so massive, so exquisite, so breath-takingly beautiful that you can hardly believe that they are the same plants that you put in the ground! And when your neighbors begin to pour into your yard—when you watch them bend and touch these flowers to see if they are real—THEN YOU WILL KNOW A FEELING OF GARDEN ACCOMPLISHMENT AND PRIDE THAT YOU NEVER DREAMED OF BEFORE! . . .

### **Bring In an Audience**

6. *At the end of this passage, other actors besides the reader are brought into the scene. Each one of them—each group of them—provides a fresh new perspective through which your reader can view the product. Seen through their eyes—experienced through their actions and reactions—the product performances become new, vivid and completely different again.*

These new participants may be celebrities, who relate their experiences through the testimonial. This technique is too familiar to warrant an example here. Or they may be average men and women, whom the reader easily identifies with, whose experiences are related through narration or the case history. Probably the most famous example of a narration is the “They Laughed When I Sat Down at the Piano” ad quoted in the first section of this book. Here, as an example of the case-history approach, we use a passage from a reducing ad:

. . . And then, if you were like the men and women whose fantastic case histories were reported by leading medical journals, perhaps you went to your doctor and asked him for AN EASY WAY OUT—WITHOUT TORTURE—AND WITHOUT SLIDING BACK! . . .

These doctors had the answer in a tiny grey pill—and a common-sense plan . . .

They instructed dozens of patients to test this miracle plan in their own homes, under these doctors’ supervision. These men and women did NOT give up the foods they loved—they simply and naturally cut down on them!

They were not given any starvation diets . . . they reported, in case after case, that they felt more pep, more energy, more youth and vitality than they had known for years!

And then, day by day, faster and easier and safer than they had ever known before, the ugly excess fat around their bodies melted away! While they were eating three delicious meals a day, they were shedding as much as five pounds a week! While they were feasting on mouth-water-

ing steaks, thick juicy slices of roast beef, potatoes, butter and bread—they were losing inch after inch after inch from around their waistlines, their thighs, their hips. Clothes that they had discarded years before began to come out of the closets and attics. Men and women both—they began to notice a new young look to their chins and faces that they'd thought they'd lost forever.

And when the plan was over . . . these men and women had lost as much as 17 and 25 and even 34 pounds . . . they had turned back their weight clock 5, 10 and even 15 years . . . And their trim, slim figures were just beginning. . . .

### Show Experts Approving

7. *But not only celebrities and ordinary people can be used to reaffirm the product benefits. Experts in the field—professionals—the sophisticated, the discriminating, the blasé can be called on to register their reactions.* There is nothing so astounding as the astonishment of experts. Here the elements of surprise, competition and discovery all combine to sharpen the image even more. This example is taken from the rose ad mentioned above:

. . . Just picture the scene as these college horticulturists began this amazing flowering test of roses. For here gathered in a test field were all the highly-praised queens of rosedom . . . floribundas, hybrid teas, polyanthas, patented roses and rose blends that today sell for as high as \$3.75 for a single plant. Row upon row of roses . . . prize-winners in international competition . . . the best the world has to offer . . . AND THEN, NEARLY WILD STARTED TO BLOOM!

Just picture the astonishment on these experts' faces when in the first month alone, Nearly Wild produced over 15 times more blossoms than the average of all other roses combined; how in July alone it produces an average of 50 new roses a day, more than 7 times as many blossoms as the second leading rose! How in August it produced 21 times more roses than its nearest competitor; and then went on. . . .

Is it any wonder that a famous rose expert upon viewing the results of this test, exclaimed: “Why, it’s like having a complete rose garden of 20 plants—all on a single bush!” Or why another rose expert, shaking his head in disbelief, stated: “If we ever released these flowering figures to the public, they’d never believe it. And if they did believe it, we couldn’t produce Nearly Wild rose plants to fill the demand in the next 25 years!” . . .

### Compare, Contrast, Prove Superiority

8. Each new approach suggests others. *The competition can be carried into contrast. The disadvantages of the old product or service can be laid side by side with the advantages of the new—throwing these advantages into sharp relief.* Here, as one example, is a brief, three-sentence passage from a book-club radio commercial that establishes the difference between random buying and book-club savings indelibly on the listener’s mind:

. . . Yes! While your friends were paying \$3.95 for their copies of Frank Yerby’s run-away best seller, *The Golden Hawk*, Dollar Book Club members were getting the same exact book for only 99¢. While your friends were paying \$4.95 for John O’Hara’s flaming new thriller, *A Rage to Live*, Dollar Book Club members were getting the same exact book for only 99¢. And while your friends were paying \$5.95 for Thomas B. Costain’s towering new triumph, *High Towers*, Dollar Book Club members were enjoying exactly the same book—for only 99¢! . . .

Or, as another example, here is a passage from a direct mail piece selling a Fuel Reclaimer—a device for the engine of your car that feeds escaping crankcase gases back into your carburetor:

. . . This device uses the suction-power of your own motor to scoop up that smoke. And then—in one of the most brilliant ideas in engineering history—it destroys that smoke

by feeding it back into your engine, where it is burned up again as a continuous, extra flow of fuel!

Think of it! Instead of polluted oil, polluted engine, polluted air—you get a constant stream of extra gasoline flowing into your engine, almost as though you had a free, second gas tank connected to your car!

Instead of one breakdown after another, one more repair bill after another, each more expensive than before—you get young-car power, young-car economy, young-car resistance to repair bills, because the deadly sludge-causers, acid-causers, filth-causers that used to ruin your car, are now being burned up as fuel in your engine! . . .

### **Picture the Black Side, Too**

9. *And there's no need to neglect the Heaven-Or-Hell approach. Here the negative aspect to every promise—the problem that you are liberating your prospect from forever—is painted in all its full black color. You irritate the wound, and then you apply the salve that heals it.*

Thus you derive two currents of motivation—repulsion away from the former problem or inadequate product, and the attraction generated by your own product's contrasting solutions.

There are several forms in which you can present this before-and-after picture. You can do it through narration or the testimonial. You can do it by using the “pitch” technique of product ridicule. Or you can simply present straight description of the old product or problem, with all its detailed drawbacks, and then follow it directly with a similar description of your new solution—in a perfectly parallel style, item by item. Here, as an example, is a passage from an ad selling a new kind of spark plug:

. . . Someday, if you ever have a spare moment, lift one of the old-fashioned spark plugs out of your car! Look at the bottom of that plug. In 10 seconds, you'll learn more about gas waste than any book could teach you in a year!

If that plug has been in your car three thousand miles or more, then what you'll see on the bottom of that plug

is FILTH! The Firing Point of that plug—the most important single point in your car—will be choked, strangled and fouled with BLACK, FILTHY CARBON! Carbon that robs your car of as much as 20 vital horsepower everytime your engine fires!

Now, wipe that filth away and look at the Firing Point itself. This is the POWER POINT of your car . . . the pin-head of electricity that turns raw gas into 300 horsepower of driving energy! And what is the condition of that point? CORRODED—PITTED—SCARRED—AND WORN! Hardly able to deliver half the spark that it should! Wasting gas—wasting money everytime you put your foot down on the gas pedal!

Yes! You pay \$2,000—\$3,000—\$4,000 for your car. And a single 99¢ part robs you of the real power and enjoyment of that car.

AT LAST! A PLUG SO SMART THAT IT “THINKS”!

Now look at the new plug—the revolutionary Power Flash plug that I’ll send you—for exactly the same price that you’re paying today.

Here is a plug that has not only ONE firing point—but hundreds of potential firing points! That actually ELIMINATES THAT DEADLY CARBON—burns it up—throws it away—KEEPS ITSELF SPARKLING CLEAN ON EVERY SINGLE STROKE! The full, blazing horsepower that was there when your car was brand-new, is still there as much as 30,000 miles later.

But that’s just the beginning! This plug actually gives you the full firing power you need for every driving condition—smooth, dependable power for city stop-and-go driving—effortless horsepower for the parkway—blazing reserve power for super speeds. . . .

And that’s still just the beginning! Best of all, this is one of the toughest, strongest, longest-lasting plugs ever made. You could actually pound it against a concrete wall with a hammer without even denting it—and this amazing plug would still fire clean and hot with 30,000 miles! Yes! These fantastic plugs give you such consistent, long-lasting service that we can afford to make one of the most amazing guarantees you have ever heard. . . .

### Show How Easy It Is to Get These Benefits

10. To repeat again, the variations are limitless. At every point that your product touches the life of your prospect—price, availability, ease of use, durability, portability, replacement and maintenance, even unwrapping the carton it comes in—it furnishes you with another fresh perspective in which to reiterate and reemphasize its benefits. Here is just one example—*stressing the ease of application, and contrasting it with the tremendous benefits that that application gives you:*

. . . One week from today, you are going down to your car. You are going to lift up its hood—you are going to take the black, shining can we send you—and you are going to simply pour its contents into the oil filler pipe of your car!

That's all the work you will do! That's all the skill you need! And yet in that 30 seconds work, you will improve that car's performance in eight different ways!

With just 30 seconds work, you will strengthen the engine of that car so greatly that you will get 2 to 3 to 5 miles more per gallon from every gallon you buy . . .

With just 30 seconds work, you will lubricate that engine so thoroughly that you will drive up to 5,000 full miles without even looking at your oil . . .

And, with just 30 seconds work, you will protect that engine so completely that you will add up to four years to its power and life! . . . You will push off the ring and piston jobs that might cost you \$75 each—for years! . . .

### Use Metaphor, Analogy, Imagination

11. *Nor do you have to be satisfied merely with the statement of raw fact. There are infinite opportunities for the use of imagination to present those facts in more dramatic form, outside of the rigidly realistic approach.* Some of the more famous examples are the Alexander Hamilton ad of the Twenties, “The Glory of the Upward Path.” Or the Big Ben alarm clock series, “First he whispers, then he shouts.” Or this passage from perhaps the most

long-lived ad of them all, the Sherwin Cody English Course, in which a manual of instruction is personified and given actual life:

. . . The basic principle of Mr. Cody's new method is habit-forming. Anyone can learn to write and speak correctly by constantly using the correct forms. But how is one to know in each case which is correct? Mr. Cody solves this problem in a simple, unique, sensible way.

*100% Self-Correcting Device.*

Suppose he himself were standing forever at your elbow. Every time you mispronounced or misspelled a word, every time you violated correct grammatical usage, every time you used the wrong word to express what you meant, suppose you could hear him whisper, "That is wrong, it should be thus and so." In a short time you would habitually use the correct form and the right words in speaking and writing.

If you continued to make the same mistakes over and over again, each time patiently he would tell you what was right. He would, as it were, be an everlasting mentor beside you—a mentor who would not laugh at you, but who would, on the contrary, support and help you. This 100% Self-Correcting Device does exactly this thing. It is Mr. Cody's silent voice behind you, ready to speak out whenever you commit an error. It finds your mistakes and concentrates on them. You do not need to study anything you already know. There are no rules to memorize. . . .

### **Before You're Done, Summarize**

12. To repeat again, there is an infinite number of new approaches. No list of them can ever be complete, because new applications, new perspectives, new viewpoints are being discovered every day.

Which of them, and how many of them you will use in a single ad, is a matter of timing and balance as you begin to put your ad together. *As long as each additional fresh perspective continues to build the dominant desire in your prospect's mind, use it.*

*But if the additional perspective is not different or dramatic enough to renew your prospect's interest in your claims, then leave it out.* To a large degree, this is a matter of sensitivity and originality on your part. The sensitivity comes from intuition and experience; the originality often comes from nothing more than hard work. And perhaps the best way to measure the balance between the two—that critical turning point where reinforcement becomes mere repetition—is to re-read your ad, some days after you have first written it.

There are, however, two conventional summary devices which are almost always used, and which must be mentioned here.

The first of these is the “*catalog*.” *This is a brief, condensed listing of all the product's performances, benefits, and/or applications, one after the other, without description, dramatization or elaboration.* Each of the benefits or perspectives which might have been given three or four paragraphs at the beginning of your ad, is here summed up in a single line.

There are two types of catalogs. Those that expand desire horizontally, among ever-enlargening groups of applications or prospects. And those that expand desire vertically, by deepening or magnifying that desire.

Here is an example of the first type of catalog—used to list all the applications of a blow torch kit that might conceivably sell it to a home owner:

#### ALL IN ONE!

Blow-Torch, Paint-Remover, Soldering Iron!

Professional-type Propane Torch also doubles as fast, safe Paint Remover and precision Soldering Iron! Does 101 jobs around the house, including—

Laying tile; removing paint or putty; thawing frozen pipes; sweating copper tubing; soldering gutters; repairing electrical work; starting charcoal fires and fireplaces; burning weeds, parasites and damp leaves; thawing frozen locks; light brazing; loosening rusty bolts; car body and fender

repairs; soldering aluminum, silver and jewelry and other hobbies, and many, many more. . . .

It is quite obvious, of course, that this catalog device uses the “shotgun approach.” Up to this point, your ad has taken a single dominant desire, and developed that single desire to the point of absolute maximum intensity. This willingness to gamble on being precisely right—on having chosen the one most powerful appeal—gives your ad the impact of a high-velocity rifle. But it also demands the accuracy of an expert marksman.

Now—through this multi-appeal catalog listing—you have a last-minute chance to hedge. Now you “shotgun” with every wide-angled appeal, benefit and application in the book. Before you were heightening a single desire, by picturing the satisfaction of that desire in a dozen different settings.

Now you are building an effect of a different kind—one of sheer magnitude, of number, of infinite possibilities—in the hope that any one of them, or the combination of all of them working together, may provide the extra added push that closes the sale.

This catalog technique was born in mail order book selling, and here it has its widest application. This next example is a continuation of the memory book ad we quoted above:

. . . But this is just the beginning of the “miracles” you can perform with your memory. This secret is just one of the over 50 MEMORY INTENSIFIERS contained in this book . . .

For instance—REMEMBERING NAMES AND FACES! . . . How would you like to walk into a room of twenty new people—meet each one of them only once—and then remember their names, automatically, for as long as you live . . .

Think of the advantage in business, when you can call every customer by his first name, and then ask for his wife and children, instantly, by their first names! Think of the impression you’ll make when you ask him about the state of his business, his hobbies, when you repeat, almost word for word, the last conversation you had with him. Think of

becoming the celebrity at your club—as the member who “knows everyone”—who can be depended on to avoid mistakes, to win new friends for the organization, to get things done!

But this is still just the beginning! This book teaches you to remember exactly what you hear and read! . . . It teaches you how to memorize a speech or a sales presentation, in minutes! It teaches you how to remember every card played when you relax at night! . . . It shows you how to improve the depth and force and power of your mind! How to double your vocabulary—learn dozens of ways to burn new words into your memory—learn their meanings without looking them up—repeat entire phrases, sentences, paragraphs from the great writers! You’ll be able to learn a foreign language in a few short weeks—at least three to four times as quickly and easily as you could without this system! You’ll be able to hear a joke, story or anecdote only once, and then repeat it in the same hilarious way!

Yes! And most important of all, this book will show you how to professionally organize your mind—do what you have to do in half the time! You’ll remember dates, addresses, appointments—automatically! You’ll carry dozens of telephone numbers in the file-cabinet of your mind! . . . Let me send you this book, and prove these facts to you in one short evening, or it doesn’t cost you a penny! . . .

The second use for this catalog technique is to pile desire upon desire, rather than application upon application. It is again a building of magnitude, of number—*but this time in summary of all the perspectives that have gone before*. This example is taken from the Fish Lure ad quoted above:

. . . Here’s What This Amazing, Self-Propelled Fish Lure Does For You!

First of all, this Self-Propelled Fish Lure frees you forever from the filthy task of digging for worms and crawlers, catching frogs, or paying 50¢ to \$1 for a bucket of minnows that die on you before you can even get them in the boat! It frees you forever from paying \$3, \$4 or even \$5 for a fancy, “dead-as-a-duck” lure that only works when

you tow it—that could never actually swim under its own power behind you!

It frees you forever from long, torturous hours of careful work, tying your own flies and lures, because you just couldn't buy anything, anywhere, that would reach out beyond your farthest casts, and pull in the fish for you!

It means that tomorrow . . . you can go out in fresh or salt water . . . and haul in the eye-poppers with a lure that actually drives them into a frenzy with its crippled minnow action and its dying bee sound! It means that you can weigh down your boat with bigmouthed bass, small mouthed bass, cat-fish, dog-fish . . . wherever you drop a line!

It means that you can fish better—novice or pro—sound asleep at the bottom of your boat—than most fishermen sweating and casting till their arms ache with ordinary, “dead-as-a-duck” lures!

And it means that you'll have the time of your life—not only amazing your friends and family with the hauls you drag home behind you—but just watching your fisherman friends' faces, the first time they see this incredible SELF-PROPELLED FISH LURE in action! Their eyes will almost pop out of their heads! . . .

### **Put Your Guarantee to Work**

13. And finally, as you close the sale, as you ask the prospect for action, as you state the terms of your guarantee, *you can turn that guarantee into the climax of your ad—the last brief summary of your product's performances—reinforced at every step by the positive reassertion of that guarantee.* Here is an example from the spark plug ad quoted above:

. . . Guaranteed For Two Full Years!

Yes! You try these amazing POWER FLASH SPARK PLUGS for two full years entirely at our risk! First, test them for one full month for surging power, thrilling new driving performance, breath-taking gas-savings alone! During that very first month alone—

1. These plugs must give you up to 9 miles more per gallon instantly—or your full purchase price back!

2. These plugs must give you up to 31 more horsepower instantly—or your full purchase price back!
3. As an extra added assurance—these plugs must continue to give you this power, performance and gas savings **FOR TWO FULL YEARS**—or we will send you a brand-new set **ABSOLUTELY FREE!** . . .

Or, as an even better example of the full impact you can gain by using your guarantee as a summary device, here is the guarantee passage from the plant food ad quoted above:

. . . These Magic English Pellets . . . cost only \$2.98 for a package of 144 pellets . . . Since only one or two pellets are required to treat the average plant, this is an investment of only a few pennies a plant for the most astounding beauty you have ever seen!

And these results are completely guaranteed! Here is what we ask you to do, when you receive your Magic Pellets next week—

**USE THEM TO CREATE SUPER-FLOWERS!** Place one tiny pellet besides each of your hydrangeas, zinneas . . . any kind of flower that you want super-blooms! And if you don't see fantastic new growth within a few short weeks . . . if you don't watch with amazement while handfuls of new blossoms burst forth from these old plants—then simply return the empty package for every cent of your money back!

**USE THEM TO CREATE SUPER-VEGETABLES!** And pick huge, breath-taking beauties within a few short weeks . . . thrill your family with the sweetest, juiciest, tenderest vegetables you've ever known—or every cent of your money back!

**YES! USE THEM IN YOUR ENTIRE GARDEN!** Use them on hard-luck plants where you've almost given up hope! Use them on the hardest-to-grow house plants that you know! Yes, even use them in sand, and absolutely astound your friends! And if you don't agree that this British invention is a true gardening miracle . . . if your garden isn't the showplace of your neighborhood at the end of one short month—then simply return the empty package—for every cent of your money back! . . .

At the end of your ad as well as at its beginning—*Intensification—building desire by presenting continually new images of its satisfaction through your product.* The first of the Processes of Persuasion.

### **How to Apply These Principles of Intensification to the Campaign**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, we have used predominantly mail order examples to illustrate the mechanism of Intensification. We have done this for two reasons. First, because mail order customarily uses long copy and hyperbole; and it is through the extremes of this long copy and these superlatives that we can see these techniques working most clearly.

Secondly, we have used mail order for these examples because mail order says all it has to say about a product in a single ad. There are no mail order “campaigns,” in the sense of a series of different-though-related advertisements, appearing one after the other, and based on a common theme. Mail order compresses such a campaign into a single ad. It says all it can, everything it can think of, in this one ad (which is often laboriously fitted together out of a series of preliminary ads, each of which contributes some element to the finished form). And then, when it has proven itself successful, it is frozen—even to the point of typography—and run until it has exhausted its potential.

Thus, mail order as a rule contains the greatest number of these Intensification devices in a single ad; and by studying these mail order ads we can see them working against each other, complementing each other, reinforcing each other, strengthening the overall effect as paragraph is piled on paragraph.

But in national advertising, the rules change. While mail order is a series of introductions of new products, the average life of which is less than two years, national advertising is concerned with products whose life span is far greater, often approaching the entire life span of advertising itself. And while the

mail order advertisement runs once, and then is not repeated for three to six months, national advertising must keep its product image constantly in front of its public, and therefore must run far more frequently.

Thus, national advertising, by its frequent insertions, soon loses its immediate novelty. The creative problem in national advertising thus changes from finding the theme for a particular advertisement to finding the theme for a series of advertisements. And the problem of Intensification shifts from building desire throughout the advertisement to building desire throughout the series. And an entirely new problem of balance emerges—*that of keeping continuity throughout the series, by maintaining the dominant image sharp enough and identifiable enough to utilize the desire generated by past advertisements, and at the same time varying that image sufficiently to induce the prospect to read it again, and therefore reinforce and sharpen that desire.*

Assuming that you have found your dominant image, your creative problem now becomes two-fold. First, to compress that image into a single statement or picture, so powerful that it will sell the product the very first time it is used, and so true to the heart of your market that it will continue to sell that product, even when it is used over and over again.

It is important to realize that—as the campaign develops—this dominant image or idea cannot remain as the headline. To present the same basic headline (or lead picture) time after time to the same audience would soon make the campaign unreadable.

This leads us to your second creative problem. To present a series of variations or perspectives of that central image—each emerging from your dominant idea, but each so different from the rest that they impel your prospect to read through them, and so fresh that they make that dominant idea seem new again.

Thus you have your Central Campaign Idea, and its continuous restatement in a series of fresh disguises.

There are as many different ways to use this basic technique of campaign construction as there are advertising styles. They

range from the most blatant and obvious to the most subtle. To start at the top, in a brief résumé of examples, consider the superbly-effective Colgate campaign of the late 1950's. Here the central idea was openly stated, and precisely repeated, during every advertisement:

“Gardol—the Invisible Shield that Protects Your Teeth.”

The variations consisted of a series of opening analogies. Using television as the most sharply-defined example, an invisible shield was shown protecting the announcer against baseballs, footballs, etc.—against which they would simply bounce off. The wording of the commercials was ritualistic. Once the initial demonstration was over, there was no variation in the sentences that followed:

“Just as this invisible shield (the announcer raps the shield with his knuckles) protects me against this baseball, so the invisible shield in Colgate toothpaste protects your teeth against decay.”

Here the variations are confined to the opening demonstration in the first ten seconds of the commercial. These are designed to startle the viewer (the ball being thrown directly at him from within the television set) and this emotional reaction is carried over to reinforce the rigidly repeated remainder of the commercial. Thus you have a quick and startling emotional involvement, welded onto a precise selling message.

Equally as powerful is the technique of repeating the exact verbal image throughout a series of advertisements, while varying and freshening the emotional appeal through a spectrum of constantly changing main illustrations. Thus the dominant image is retained intact—continuity is maintained—but there is no feeling of over-familiarity or boredom. This technique might be named “Rule and Example.” Two of its most effective uses recently have been in the hair styling field. First with Toni, where the precisely-repeated verbal image was:

“WHICH TWIN HAS THE TONI—and which has the \$15 permanent?”

Above this unvarying headline was a continuously-changing stream of pretty girls—each new picture making the question new again, and requiring an interplay of examination between the picture and the copy to discover the answer.

The same technique was used, some years later, by Clairol to sell their hair tint. Here the Rule was expressed in the precisely-repeated headline:

“DOES SHE OR DOESN'T SHE?  
“Hair-coloring so natural only her hairdresser knows for sure.”

Here again, this headline was re-invigorated by a series of main illustrations, of attractive young women, in common but glamorized every-day activities, enjoying their lives. Here again, the Examples not only proved the Rule, but renewed it.

At the other extreme, however, the dominant image may not even appear in the advertisements themselves, but may merely be the underlying theme for the campaign as a whole. Here the continuity is retained—not by a precisely-repeated slogan or statement—but by a single, rigidly-maintained focal point. This focal point may be a dominant product appeal—such as the Cadillac quality, which is symbolized in every Cadillac advertisement in the identification background photography, in the typography, in the copy style, in the fashions and jewelry that are chosen to appear with the car, and the credit lines that are given to them—even to the highly-stylized pen-and-ink drawings that are used when the campaign shifts to newspapers.

Or, if it so merits, the focal point may be simply the product itself. In such a campaign, each succeeding advertisement reveals another fact about the product. Each is completely different; no single phrase or slogan is repeated twice. Here the variations comprise the entire verbal content of the advertisements. But

their subject-matter, and the illustrations, are always the same—the product.

Perhaps the best example of this technique is the magnificent Volkswagen magazine campaign. Here the advertisements are reduced to severe simplicity. There is no background identification whatsoever. Different perspectives of the product are shown as close-up as possible (except in the “Think Small” advertisement) against an absolutely bare background.

Against this rigid focus on the car itself, to the exclusion of every other visual element, the series of copy messages presents a complete exploration of every facet of the car’s performance, utility, economy, durability, service facilities and what-have-you. Any single advertisement is sufficient to interest a prospective buyer. Together, especially when concentrated in the same media and reaching the same audience week after week, the series builds an overwhelming impression of novelty and value—the theme of an *Honest Car*. Here, as examples, are only a few of the dozens of different headlines:

“THINK SMALL.”

(The first in the series, discussing the merits of compactness as an asset.)

“*Lemon.*”

(Showing what appears to be a perfectly good car, and discussing the microscopic, almost unnoticeable flaw in it that disqualified it.)

“*Our new model.*”

(A car that shows no difference, but has dozens of essential engineering changes inside the car, where they won’t make present models obsolete.)

“*Why you should open the window before you close the door of a Volkswagen.*”

(Discussing the fact that the car is airtight, and the quality that this fact symbolizes.)

“*Our number one salesman.*”

(The serviceman, of course, typifying the quality of care

the VW owner gets, and combatting the conception that foreign cars give sparse service.)

And so on. A series of building-block advertisements, making no attempt to tell the complete story in themselves, relying on their ability to grasp the prospective buyer and carry him through a procession of short, sharply focussed sales stories that combine to give an informed desire of tremendous depth.

Notice, incidentally, that each of these headlines fulfills the requirements necessary to place it at the top of an ad. Each of them reaches out and touches the prospect at the point of his dominant desire (to get more value for his car money). Each expresses the common theme of the campaign (this is an honest car). *And each moves the prospect into the body copy—it gets him to read the complete, though brief, selling message* (The first, second, third and fifth headline do this through presenting the reader with an apparent contradiction—in the first case, with his accepted notion of “thinking big,” and in the remaining advertisements, between the message of the headline and the content of the photograph above it—thus compelling the reader to go through the body copy to resolve the contradiction. The fourth does it by promising the reader information explaining an unusual and provocative request).

Notice also that to accomplish this novelty-within-continuity, and to grasp the attention of the prospect over a series of advertisements, and to move him into the body copy where he can be sold more thoroughly, each of these headlines takes the “Creative Gamble.” The product, its trademark, or its performance is not mentioned in the headline. *The copy writer is taking the position that he can only sell adequately with the number of words allowed him by the body copy.* Therefore he is willing to risk his headline in grasping the attention of his prospect and impelling him to read on, into the sales message itself, presented in convincing detail below. If he fails in his gamble, he has wasted his page. If he succeeds, he has doubled and tripled the effectiveness of his ad.