

Advertising.

Practical Hints on Advertising.

By CHARLES AUSTIN BATES, New York.

The booklet is necessary. Many makers of booklets make the mistake of talking too much before they begin to tell their story. I like a booklet that jumps right into the middle of the story on the first page and talks business from the first letter to the last period. I do not like the booklet, or the advertisement, for that matter, that begins in some such way as this: "That interesting work, Webster's Unabridged, defines a hinge as a joint on which a door-lid, etc., hangs or turns." This sort of thing is generally the opening to two or three pages of unnecessary introductory literary matter. Business men don't have time to read stories during business hours, no matter how interesting and well written the stories may be. If a man who is interested in hinges gets a booklet about hinges, he wants to get the meat out of it as quickly as he can. He doesn't care anything about what Webster's may possibly say about hinges. He knows what a hinge is, and his opinion and Webster's may differ. He cares more about the quality and prices of the commercial hinge than he does to know the dictionary definition of the word.

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Make your advertisements plain. Some people can get very much more from a mere suggestion than others can from a detailed description.

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A business-bringing ad is what you want, not merely an impression-making ad.

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In your advertisements be careful that you make your meaning perfectly clear every time.

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The only test of advertising is its effectiveness in the actual sale of goods, either directly or indirectly.

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A criticism of an ad, even though it be wrong, is pretty sure to be valuable. Intelligent criticism, or even criticism that is not intelligent, helps a man in one or two ways. It either shows him that he is right or that he is wrong. Frequently it is worth just as much to know you are right as to know you are wrong.

Drop technicalities—appeal to your readers from the purchaser's standpoint.

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A great many men succeed without advertising, or with poor advertising, that is to say, they succeed in spite of their advertising. Advertising doesn't make a business. It only helps to make it. A rightly conducted business can succeed without advertising, but it will take a longer time than if good advertising were employed, and the success is not likely to be so great or so widespread.

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I am very far from being a religious man. I have no particular predilection for any creed or any form of religion; but I respect every man's religion, whether it consists of an absolute belief in the reverence for the Bible or a certainty of the omnipotence of the sun. There are millions of people in America who hold the Bible sacred, and even those who do not can certainly have nothing but contempt for the man who will hold it up to ridicule, with the idea that by so doing he is advertising his business. Humor is a bad thing to put into advertising at the best, but sacrilegious humor is absolutely abominable. Keep the Bible out of your advertisements. Do not paraphrase Biblical language. Advertising of that description won't sell goods.

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The publishers of local newspapers everywhere have my most distinguished consideration. I used to publish a local newspaper myself, and I know some of the trials and tribulations of the business. I trust this preface to the remarks I am going to make will show that the object of them is really to benefit publishers as much as it is to benefit advertisers.

Newspaper publishers will get more benefit from progress in advertising than any other class of men, and yet they are the ones of all others who throw obstacles in the path of the progressive advertiser. I have recently had it brought forcibly to my attention that many publishers in both large and small cities fine their advertisers when they endeavor to make their ads more profitable. They apparently do not want the advertising made profitable—at least, profitable to the advertiser.

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Publishers refuse to change the ads of local advertisers unless exorbitant extra charges are paid. In doing this they are

certainly standing in their own light. They are doing what they can to make the advertising unprofitable, and, if it is made unprofitable, how in the world can they expect it to be continued or increased? If they are not getting enough money for their space to afford to change the ads frequently then they ought to advance their rates. I believe, however, that it is generally true that they are getting enough money to permit the frequent change of the advertisements. Several years ago, when I was making some contracts with a large number of local papers, I proposed to furnish electrotypes, provided I could get a concession in rates by so doing. I was told that it did not make any difference whether the electrotypes were sent or whether the composition was done in the office, because the printers were there and were employed by the week, so that it cost no more when they were busy than when they were not busy. This is undoubtedly the case in most local newspaper offices. It must of necessity be in only the larger cities, where composition is paid for by the piece, that the changes of advertising make any appreciable difference in the expense of getting out a paper.

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It doesn't cost much to set an entire paper in an ordinary weekly office. There are comparatively few papers that are all set in the office of issue. Plate matter is now so good that the average local editor cannot possibly improve upon it, even if he gives his entire time to the subject. An ordinarily good printer can set several columns of advertisements in a day. I mean the ordinary run of ads that go into weekly papers. Of course, if he has any fancy work on the ads, or if a good many of them have borders, he won't set so much, but I should think a reasonably fast printer ought to set six or eight columns of ads in a day. I suppose that the average price paid for this kind of work in newspaper offices all over the country is not more than \$2 a day. In the general run of country offices I doubt if it is more than \$1.50 a day. At this last rate it would cost something like 25 cents to change a column of ads. Of course, the making up would take some time, but the increased business which would surely come from this kind of work would more than pay for the time and trouble involved.

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It is surprising that any newspaper publisher can be found who is so blind to