

David Ogilvy (Confessions of an Advertising Man)

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SUMMARY

David Ogilvy's "Confessions of an Advertising Man" explores his journey in the advertising industry, emphasizing the importance of creativity, hard work, and individual excellence. Originally written in 1963, the book has had a lasting impact, selling over a million copies and influencing countless marketers and advertisers. Ogilvy shares his insights on effective advertising strategies, the significance of corporate culture, and the necessity of hiring talented individuals.

- *Ogilvy's advertising agency achieved rapid success, leading to the book's creation to attract clients and establish his reputation.*
- *He emphasizes the importance of a strong corporate culture and the need for agencies to cultivate their unique identities.*
- *Key maxims include: "We sell or else," "You cannot bore people into buying," and "The consumer is not a she, she is your wife."*
- *Ogilvy believes in the power of a big idea and the importance of thorough research and knowledge in advertising.*
- *He advocates for hard work, stating that "Midnight Oil" is crucial for success, and that talent often comes from nonconformists.*
- *The book stresses the significance of clear communication and the need to promise benefits to consumers.*
- *Ogilvy highlights the importance of headlines in advertisements, claiming they are the most critical element.*
- *He encourages aspiring advertisers to study past successes and learn from them, reinforcing the idea that individual greatness drives creative organizations.*

14 years before writing these confessions I had gone to New York and started an advertising agency Americans thought I was crazy what could Scotsman know about advertising my agency was an immediate and meteoric success I wrote this book during my summer vacation in 1962 I thought it would sell 4,000 copies to my surprise it was a runaway bestseller and so far has sold over a million copies why did I write it first to attract new clients to my advertising

agency second to condition the market for a public offering of our shares third to make myself better known in the business World it achieved all three of these purposes my colleagues at Ogilvy and Mather have largely followed my ideas and they have sold a lot of products for a lot of Manufacturers with the result that our agency is now 60 times as big as it was when I wrote this book the book was first published in 1963 he is

writing the introduction to the updated version 25 years later I get letters from strangers who thank me for the

dramatic Improvement in their sales when they follow the advice contained in this book and I meet big shots in the world of marketing who say that they owe their careers to reading my book if you detect a slight stench of conceit in this book I would have you know that my conceit is selective I am a miserable Duffer in

everything except advertising I cannot read a balance sheet work a computer ski sale play golf or paint but when it comes to advertising advertising age magazine says that I am the creative king of advertising when Fortune Magazine published an article about me entitled it is David olvy a genius I asked my lawyer to sue the editor for the question mark funny enough that's how I originally discovered ogy I was reading Warren Buffett shareholder letters and he kept referring to David

Oggy as a genius confessions of an advertising man says nothing about corporate culture notably the corporate culture of advertising agencies in 1962 I had never heard of corporate culture nor had anybody else but thanks to two students of business Terence deal and Alan Kell Kennedy we now know that people who built the companies for which America is famous all worked obsessively to create strong cultures within their organizations companies that have cultivated their individual identities by shaping values making Heroes spelling

out rights and rituals and acknowledging the cultural Network have an edge the head of one of the biggest agencies recently told me that ogave and Mather is the only agency in the world with a real corporate culture it may be this more than anything else which differentiates us from our competitors through maddening repetition some of my maxims have been woven into our culture here are some of them number one we sell our else number two you cannot bore

people into buying your product you can only interest them in buying it number three we prefer the discipline of knowledge to the Anarchy of ignorance we pursue knowledge the way a pig pursues truffles a blind pig can sometimes find truffles but it helps to know that they grow in Oak forests number four we hire gentlemen with brains that's one of my favorite ones number five the consumer is not a she is your wife don't insult her

intelligence number six unless your campaign contains a big idea it will pass like a ship in the night I doubt if more than one campaign in a 100 contains a big idea I'm supposed to be one of the most fertile inventors of big ideas but in my long career I have not had more than 20 number seven only first class business and that in a first class way number eight never run an advertisement you would not want your own family to

see and number nine is OG's reaffirmation of his belief in the individual capacity for greatness search all the parks in your cities you'll find no statues of committees that was an excerpt from the book I'm going to talk to you about today which is confessions of an advertising man and it was written by David Oggy ogy has become one of my personal Heroes somebody I did not know uh even existed before I started Founders podcast it's been over almost

over two years now almost two years since I've last done an episode on him this will be the fifth podcast that I've made about him and I just think it's been way too long since I spent some time in the mind of David ogy so that's

why I'm reading rereading this book right now I want to finish out the introduction before I go into a little bit of it about his early life because he's just got a great a bunch of great

ideas that's really what I think this podcast will be it's just a bunch of fantastic ideas that ogy learned over his multiple decade career this is something that he's famous for saying it's one of his uh most repeated aphorisms and that's uh pay peanuts and you get monkeys clients who haggle over their ay's compensation are looking through the wrong end of the telescope instead of trying to shave a few measly cents off the agency's 15% they should

concentrate on getting more sales results from their 85% that they spend on time and space that is where the Leverage is no manufacturer ever got rich by underpaying his agency pay peanuts and you get monkeys and that right there is an example of why spending time reading ogab I think he is the best writer that I've ever read uh for anybody uh out of any the books uh that I've read for the podcast because he he's a master at language and just

getting condensing these ideas down so that you actually stick in your brain right you can read that entire paragraph or you could just read the last sentence pay peenuts and you get monkeys and you understand what he's saying and he'll do this he like repeats these aphorisms and maxims over and over and over again and it's just a way to express these ideas that he deeply deeply believes in one idea that he deeply deeply believes in

is that you should study the experience and the great work that came before you and if you don't you're an ignorant amateur which I love he says advertising agencies still waste their clients money repeating the same mistakes during a 10-hour train ride I read the ads and three magazines most of them violated Elementary principles which were discovered in Years Gone by the copywriters and art directors who created them are ignorant amateurs what is the reason for their failure to study

experience are they afraid afraid that knowledge would impose some discipline on them or expose their incompetence so he ends the introduction of this updated copy of confession of an advertising man with his last wheel in test man he's like okay these are the most valuable lessons that I've learned and this is updated in 1988 he's going to die about 10 years later 11 years later in 1999 and he says so I'm just going to give you a couple of these ideas that I think

are good uh creating successful advertising is a craft it's part inspiration but mostly knowhow and hard work if you have a modicum of tent and know which techniques work at the cast register you will go a long way here's another one the temptation to entertain instead of selling is contagious that's something he does not like that's why his uh when he's building his corporate culture the second thing that he would repeat over and over again is that we

sell or else we're not here to win Awards we're here to sell products for our customers another uh another one of his lessons the difference between one advertisement and another when measured in terms of sales can be as much as 19 to 1 so that sentence right there is why if you're listening to this right now I would immediately uh

search for Olan advertising and and buy that book before you finish this podcast because that is the most that book I think was also

published in 1988 or sometime in I think it was written 20 years after this book and so he had he had accumulated another like two decades of of experience in advertising uh between writing the confessions of an advertising man and ogave on Advertising there is a bunch of examples in ogave on Advertising in of what he just said and why it's so important to learn this craft because you're thinking you're running ads and yet one ad the difference between one ad

or another can generate as much as 19 times the amount of sales another idea from ogy the key to success is to promise the consumer a benefit like better flavor whiter wash more miles per gallon and a or a better complexion another one what works in one country almost always works in other countries something I realized in rereading this book right after I read uh James Dyson's autobiography for the Third for time is a lot of their ideas are the same uh

James says that one editorial one great editorial is worth a thousand advertisements uh ogab says editors of magazines are better communicators than advertising people copy their techniques this is also another idea that Dyson repeats in his book that ogave repeats in this one most campaigns are too complicated they reflect a long list of objectives and try to reconcile the diversion Divergent views of too many Executives by attempting to cover too many things they achieve nothing nothing

their advertisements look like the minutes of a committee in Dyson's autobiography which I just covered again on episode 300 he says you simply cannot mix your messages when selling something new a consumer can barely handle one great new idea let alone two or even several and then the last idea from this section is good campaigns can run for many years without losing their selling power my ey patch campaign for hathway shirts ran for 21 years my campaign for

Dove soap has been running for 31 years and it is now a bestseller so the first time I read this book was over four years ago and in my mind the reason I picked it up I was like okay I want more I want like an autobiography of olvie and that that's that's how I remembered the book in my mind and realized that the autobiographical section of the book is like three pages and most of it is just straight idea

after idea after idea that help you sell more products so I do want to go over his background because again I just I love his writing and you'll see his personality jumps off the page my mother was a beautiful and Ecentric Irish woman she disinherited me on the grounds that I was likely to acquire more money than was good for me without any help from her I could not disagree at the age of nine I was sent to board at an

aristocratic school for boys the Headmaster wrote of me he has a distinctly original mind he's inclined to argue with his teachers and to try and convince them that he is right and the books are wrong but this is perhaps further proof of his originality at the age of 13 I was sent to a Scottish School whose Spartan disciplines had been established by my great uncle after I went to Oxford and made a botch of it I was too preoccupied to do

any work and

was duly expelled and then this paragraph is what makes I think his his his personal story just so amazing he went through multiple Decades of trying to find his life's work that was in 1931 the bottom of the depression for the next 17 years while my friends were establishing themselves as doctors lawyers civil servants and politicians I adventured about about the world uncertain of my purpose I was a chef in Paris a door too door to-door salesman

a social worker in the slums of Edenberg an associate of Dr Gallop in research for the motion picture industry and an assistant to Sir William Stevenson I think this was the guy that was the one of The Inspirations for the character James Bond an assistant to Sir William Stevenson in the British security coordination department and a farmer with the Amish in Pennsylvania and then he goes into the fact that that's not what he expected when he was growing up

I had expected to become Prime Minister when I grew up instead I finally became an advertising agent on Madison Avenue the revenues of my 19 clients are now greater than the revenue of Her Majesty's government my father used to say of a product that it was very well spoken of in the advertisements I spend my life speaking well of products in advertisements by writing this book in the old-fashioned firstperson singular I have committed an offense against a

convent of Contemporary American manners but I think it's artificial to write we when I'm confessing my sins and describing my adventures and then for the rest of the book it's just David giving us ideas that he learned through the experience of his multiple decade career this is one of my favorite parts of the entire book it's the fact these are lessons that David learned working under a Master Chef and he realizes like oh these lessons can be applied to any

field so it says managing an advertising agency is like managing any other creative organization a research laboratory a magazine an architect's office or a great kitchen 30 years ago I was chef at the hotel met Majestic in Paris there were 37 chefs in our Brigade from morning to night we sweated and shouted and cursed and cooked every man was inspired by one ambition to cook better than any other Chef had ever cooked before so he's going to work

under the head shft this guy named petar and so it says I have always believed that if I can understand how petar the head chef inspired such white hot morale I could apply the same kind of leadership to the management of my advertising agency to begin with he was the best cook in the whole Brigade and we knew it it was inspiring to work for a supreme Master he ruled with a rod of iron and we were terrified of him he

praised very seldom but when he did we were exalted to the skies today I praise my staff as rarely as he praised his chefs in the hopes that they too will appreciate it more than a steady gush of appreciation here's another trait that ogy copied from the head chef and this is why he mentioned it earlier he can't stand people that are bad at their jobs uh he calls them ignorant amateurs he is rather OG was rather ruthless and so was

a head chef he did not tolerate incompetence he knew that it is demoralizing for professionals to work alongside incompetent amateurs he uses that term incompetent amateurs a lot this part when I got to this part reminded me of what Steve Jobs Steve the the the Steve Jobs's a player Theory so it says jobs had latched onto what he believed was a key management lesson from his Macintosh experience you have to be ruthless if

you want to build a team of a players let me pause there what did the head chef do he did not tolerate incompetence he knew that it was demoralizing for professionals to work alongside incompetent amateurs let's go back to a quote from Steve Jobs it's too easy as your team grows to put up with a few B players and then they attract a few more B players and soon you will even have some C C players Steve said the

Macintosh experience taught me that a players like to work only with other a players which means you cannot indulge B players back to more lessons from the head chef he taught me the exorbitant standards of service for example he once heard me tell a waiter that we were fresh out of the plate de jour and almost fired me for it in a great kitchen he said one must always honor what one has promised on the menu

and then oggy tells us how he used this idea building Oggy and Ma today I see red when anybody at oggy and Ma tells a client that we cannot produce an advertisement on the day we have promised it in the best establishments which is the only the only thing that Olie was interested in he wanted to build a first class business in a first class way he says over and over again in all of his writings he not he's not

trying to be the biggest he's trying to be the best and you have to understand that if you're if you're going to read ogab that's all he cares about Supreme Excellence being better than every single other person at his craft that is what's so fascinating about this guy and again why the hell would Warren Buffett call him a genius how many people how many managers founders of businesses has has Warren seen in his lifetime there should be like sirens going off in your

mind think hey maybe you should pay attention to this guy maybe you should read his book I just love stuff like this today I see red when anybody at oine Ma tells a client that we cannot produce an advertisement on the day we have promised it in the best establishment which is all that he's trying to build right in the best establishments promises are always kept whatever it may cost in agony and overtime damn that is good writing

whatever it may cost an Agony and overtime and then I love how he combines the the lessons he learned and the experience he learned at Hotel Majestic with now running his worldclass Agency for the last 14 years at the time he's writing this I've come to the conclusion that the top man so he is talking about the role of the founder here okay I need to be very clear about this he is discussing the role of the founder I've

come to the conclusion that the top man has one principal responsibility to provide an atmosphere in which creative Mavericks can do useful work so then he goes into something that he had to do as this company grew it's like when it's a small team you can talk to them every day uh but at this point he's writing he's got like 500 employees so once a year what he would do is he would gather everybody together and he's just going

to teach teach teach this is where he talked about the importance they didn't call IT company culture but that's what we' call it today and so he says like every year he'd gather them and he talks about what kind of behavior that he admires and that he expects from every single person in the organization so I'm going to go over the 10 things that he tells him but what I thought was so interesting too is after after he tells

his team what he expects of them he tells his team what he expects of himself so it says I admire this is this is another great thing about his writing you'll remember it it's very easy to read and because he loves these numbered lists uh number one I admire people who work hard who bite the bullet I dislike passengers who don't pull their weight in the boat it is more fun to be overworked than to be underworked there

is an economic Factor built into hard work the harder you work the fewer employees we need and the more profit we make the more profit we make the more money becomes available for all of us number two I admire people with first class brains because you cannot run a great great advertising agency or a great company without brainy people but brains are not enough unless they are combined with intellectual honesty number three three I have an inviable

rule against employing knots and spouses because they breed politics Whenever two of our people get married one of them must depart I wonder if that's even legal anymore number four I admire people who work with gusto if you don't enjoy what you're doing this is this is my favorite one of this entire section I admire people who work with gusto Gusto is a word he uses a lot too I admire people who work with gusto if you don't

enjoy what you're doing I beg you to find another job remember the Scottish proverb be happy while you're living for your a long time dead number five I despise toes who suck up to their bosses they are genuinely the same people who bully their subordinates number six I admire self-confident professionals the craftsmen who do their jobs with suppurative Excellence see what I mean he's just it's Excellence above everything else with oy they always seem to respect the expertise of their

colleagues number seven I admire people who hire subordinates who are good enough to succeed them I pity people who are so in secure that they feel compelled to hire inferiors as their subordinates number eight I admire people who build up their subordinates because that is the only way we can promote from within the ranks I detest having to go outside to fill important jobs and I look forward to the day when that will never be necessary number nine

I admire people with gentle manners who treat other people as human beings I abhor quarrelsome people people I abhor people who engage in paper Warfare the best way to keep the peace is to be candid and the last one number 10 I admire well-organized people who deliver their work on time the Duke of Wellington never went home until he had finished all of the work on his desk and then he transitions into what he expects from himself number one I try to be fair

and to be firm to make unpopular decisions without cowardice to create an atmosphere of stability and to listen more than I talk number two I try to sustain the momentum of the agency it's ferment it's Vitality it's forward

thrust and that's just another example of why I consider okay one of my heroes like I I do like I look at him like man I want to be like this just his his Mastery of language to get you to

remember the ideas like he's just so good at this number three I try to build the agency by Landing new accounts number four I try to win the confidence of our clients at the highest level number five I try to make sufficient profits to keep you all from perner in old age number six I plan our policies far into the future number seven I try to recruit people of the highest quality at all levels to build the hottest staff

in the agency business and number eight I try to get the best out of every man and wom in the agency and then he goes into the fact that his goal is to pursue Excellence over bigness I have no ambition to preside over a vast bureaucracy that is why we only have 19 clients the pursuit of Excellence is less profitable than the pursuit of bigness but it can be more satisfying my success or failure and this is something

that he just I mean he shares again I'm going to use the the the uh the example of Steve Jobs this is from episode 299 from that new book on Steve Jobs that was just released for free by Steve Jobs archive where Steve said that's been the most important lesson I've learned in business that the dynamic range of people dramatically exceeds things you encounter in the rest of our normal lives and to try to find those really

great people who love what they do OG be saying the same thing right here to all of his people my success or failure at the head of this agency depends more than anything else on my ability to find people who can create great campaigns people with fire in their bellies and then he gives advice to other people trying to recruit really talented people he's got a maximum that he's going to repeat 5,000 times and it's two words

tolerate genius everybody's like oh I want the most talented people not realizing the most talented people are usually highly disagreeable they're Mavericks they're non-conformist they're very very difficult to deal with and he says like don't strangle the goose that lays the golden egg you have to understand that there there's a reason like the most talented people are going to you know have the the in many cases these hard to deal with personalities and he says the business Community wants

remarkable advertising but turns a cold shoulder shoulder to the kind of people who can produce it so then he's going to reference one of his advertising Heroes this guy named Albert Lasker I read just like I always do if I find somebody I admire and then they talk about who they admire I have to go and read their biography make an episode on it if you haven't listened to it it's episode 20 206 206 Albert Lasker made more money in

advertising than anybody else and because he was able to like he understood what what ogave is trying to tell us it's like you want remarkable advertising you want remarkable talent and then you want them to be like conformists and like that's not going to work and so he says that is why most advertisements are so informally dull because they don't they're made by dull people right Albert laser made \$50 million partly because he could stomach the atrocious manners of

his great copywriters and they list him one of these guys is this guy named Claude Hopkins done two podcasts on ogy talks about Hopkins over and over again he says you could you shouldn't no one should be allowed to ever create an ad without reading Hopkins book scientific advertising six times and so Hopkins is a main character in Albert lasker's biography as well and then ogy expounds on why there's such crappy advertising everywhere he says some of the mammoth

agencies are now being managed by second generation caretakers who floated to the top of their organizations because they were smooth contact men but these type of men cannot create campaigns Andy summarizes his main point here beautifully talent I believe is most likely to be found among nonconformist dissenters and Rebels and so just like he said in the introduction he is constantly insulting and making fun of these businesses that are run by committee he like Edwin Lan like Steve

Jobs like a bunch of the people you and I study on the podcast he believes in indiv the capacity for individual greatness he hates teamwork he calls teamwork uh I think there's a line later on the book it's like teamwork is just like this madeup term uh by mediocre men so this is very I'll get there in one second I just love this guy uh it is very fascinating because I think this is you know you hear me talk over and over

again the importance of us building ourselves into formidable people and I'm pretty sure like be becoming a formidable individual I've repeated over and over again for over the last couple years and I'm pretty sure that idea came from olgy in this book I think that might be the first time I ever heard that and something that just stuck in my mind but before I get there he has this this great idea where I do think like

you have the benefit of being incapable of logical thought this is going to sound crazy but listen to what he says here the majority of businessmen are incapable of original thinking because they're unable to escape from the tyranny of Reason their imaginations are blocked I am almost incapable of logical thought but I have developed techniques for keeping open the telephone line to my unconscious in case that disorderly repository has anything to tell me I listen to a great deal of music I take

long hot baths I Garden I go into Retreat among the Amish he's not kidding about that by the way I watch Birds I go for long walks in the country and I take frequent Vacations so that my brain can lie fallow I think that is the most important phrase in this entire this entire paragraph give your brain a rest so my brain can lie fallow no golf no cocktail parties no tennis no Bridge no concentration only a bicycle while thus

employed in doing nothing I receive a constant stream of telegrams from my unconscious and these become the raw material for my advertisements but more is required and he's going to list some traits that he desires in himself and others but more is required hard work an open mind and an ungovernable curiosity and then he States his belief in the individual capacity for greatness I have observed that no creative organization whether it is a research laboratory a

magazine a a parish kitchen an advertising agency will produce a great body of work unless it is led by a formidable individual and if Founders wasn't called Founders that's what it would be called because that is who

we are studying we are studying formidable individuals and formidable individuals do not have Bland personalities few of the great creators have Bland personalities they are cantankerous egotists the kind of men who are

unwelcome in the modern Corporation consider Winston Churchill he drank like a fish he was capricious and willful when opposed he soaked he was rude to fools he was wildly extravagant he wept on the slightest provocation he was inconsiderate to his staff yet Lord Allenbrook his chief of staff would write later I shall look back on the years I worked with him as some of the most difficult and trying ones in my life for all that I thank God that I was

given the opportunity of working alongside of such a man and having my eyes opened to the fact that occasionally such Supermen exist on the earth okay so then he has an entire chapter on how to get clients and he goes into what like what are some of the customer acquisition techniques that he used when he was starting his U his advertising agency he says 15 years ago I was an obscure tobacco farmer in Pennsylvania today I preside over one of

the best advertising agencies in the United States with Billings of 55 million a year how did this come to pass on the day in 1948 when I hung out my shingle I issued this following order of the day so now this is OG writing he says this is a new agency struggling for its life for some time we shall be overworked and underpaid in hiring the emphasis will be on youth we are looking for Young Turks I have no use for

Toadies or hacks I seek gentlemen with brains and what's remarkable is how much he wrote this out in advance and it wound up becoming true agencies are as big as they deserve to be we starting this one on a Sho string but we are going to make it a great agency before 1960 what he did and he also the very next day he made a list of the five clients that he wanted the most and so

some of these like Campbell sh Soup company remember this is more than half a century ago uh shell all these other companies this is the crazy thing he has this footnote here he says to pick such Blue Chip targets was an act of mad presumption but all five of them are now clients of Olie and Mather and so when he has no money and no one knows who he is all of his client acquisition has to

be outbound so he's like okay well what's the smartest play here and he comes he does something that's really smart he's like okay well if you already have if you're an existing company you already have an advertising agency maybe you like them what's the chance I'm going to be able to go in there and convince you to go with me I'm I have no proven record so this is what he did following Henry Ford's advice to his

dealers that they should solicit by personal visitation I started by soliciting advertisers who did not employ an agency at all he also did something that I thought was genius cuz I wrot this is genius the first time I read the this book and I still think it's genius he does this like highly targeted Direct Mail campaign but it's not just hey I'm OG I can do your advertising he doesn't even do that at all he sends useful and valuable

information that pertains to them let me tell you what I mean I sent frequent progress reports to 600 people in every Walk of Life this barrage of direct mail was read by the most August of advertisers for example when I solicited part of the seom account Sam brofman who's the founder of segs I think I covered him back on like episode 115 he's got a crazy life story for example when I Sol solicited part of the cro

account Sam brofman played back to me the last two paragraphs of a 16 page speech that I had sent him shortly before and he hired us gentle reader if you are shocked by these confessions of self self-advertisement I can only plead that if I had behaved in a more professional way it would have taken me 20 years to arrive I had neither the time nor the money to wait I was poor unknown and in a hurry and so another thing that he

repeats over and over again is his belief in Midnight Oil his belief in hard work he says next to luck Midnight Oil is the best weapon to use in hunting new business and so a few pages later he demonstrates this and I just wrote at the top of the page how bad do you want it how bad do you want it the biggest account I ever got was shell so the oil company right the shell people saw the

work that he had done this is later in his career he had done uh some great advertising work for Rolls-Royce and so they show people send this like long questionnaire and I think it's uh they're trying to test out or there's a competition I think there's like something like I don't know 15 or 18 different potential advertising agencies and so ogave is like okay there's you know maybe a thousand advertising agencies out there I'm down to maybe the

the the now now that that number's from a thousand now I'm to 15 how can I make myself stand out again how bad do you want it so they send out this long questionnaire all these agencies are supposed to fill it out send it back and ogab does it himself he says I stayed up all night drafting answers to the Shell questionnaire my answers were more candid than it's customary another way to say I was trying to differentiate

myself right my answers were more candid than it's customary but I thought they would make a favorable impression on Max Burns who at that time uh was the president of shell the next morning I learned that he had gone to England so he fills out the questionnaire sends it to Max thinks Max's going to get it he's like oh no Max isn't in New York he went to England what do you think OG is about to do what would most people do they're

like oh sit there and just wait till he gets back no wrong answer the next morning I learned that he had gone to England so I flew to London and left a message at his hotel saying that I wanted to see him for 10 days there was there was no reply and I had almost given up hope when my telephone rang and it said uh and reported that Mr Burns wanted me to lunch with him on the

following day now this is just a good this is also he said midnight luck and Midnight Oil right that's what you need in the hunt for uh for new business so imagine trying to chase down the president of shell to to prove to him how bad you wanted his account right doesn't hear from him for 10 days the day he says oh come to lunch with me tomorrow Ori was going to be lunching with the secretary of state of Scotland

right again that that looks good on he's like oh this guy must be important uh for 10 days there was no reply i' almost given up hope my telephone rang Mr Burns wanted me to lunch with him on the following day I had already engaged myself to lunch with the Secretary of State for Scotland so I sent burns the following signal Mr olvy now this is ious he's writing this he doesn't say hey I'm having lunch

Mr ogy is lunching with the secretary of state of Scotland at the House of Commons they would be delighted if you would join them they he wrote it himself I don't know why I find this so funny he wrote himself uh so what happens Mr Burns like yeah I'll come along and so he says on the way to the house I was able to give burns the gist of my answers to his questionnaire in person you cannot understate how

important in person is it'll always be important so I gave him my answer to my questionnaire back in New York the next day he introduced me to the man who was about to succeed him as the president of shell 3 weeks later the new president telephoned me to say that we got the account so let's go back to this idea of the importance of making yourself into a formidable individual uh one of the reasons is the the better you are doing

that the less competition you have and he talks about this uh like he knows how good they are so he says we take immense pains to select our clients it is not generally realize that there aren't enough first class agencies to go around so by prioritizing Excellence right maybe there there might be a thousand good agencies in the world there might be 15 great agencies in the world there might be five truly excellent agencies in the world so his whole point is like

just keep doing more work that other people won't do make yourself into a formidable individual and as a result you'll just have less competition than the mediocre majority if you set high standards in one Department you're like to set high standards in every Department the number of men who can preside over an agency's entire creative output can be numbered on the fingers of one hand he clearly knows that he's one of them he calls them he calls he's got

a weird term term for this for super chal supremely talented people he calls them trumpeter swans which is just bizarre he says these rare trumpeter swans must be capable of inspiring a mly crew of talented people like writers and artists right uh they must be sure-footed judges of campaigns for a wide range of diff different products they must be good presenters uh and also salespeople and they must have a colossal appetite for Midnight Oil see see what I mean here he finds these

terms these distinctive terms and he repeats them over and over and over and over again how many times you used the word Midnight Oil in this book so far it's probably like the fifth time I read it and I'm only on page 69 word got around that I was one of these rare birds and it occurred to several of the big agencies that they should hire me even if they had to take my whole agency even if it took even if they had to take

my whole agency to get me and so what he's referencing There Is that real recogniz is real so you have all these other formidable uh advertising agency Founders they're a little bit more established than ogra was at this point in his career and so what do they always try to do they try to buy him smart on their part no doubt and also

smart on his part to say nope and part of the reason he would say no is because he

wants to be a great man he doesn't want to work for a great man he's got this great I always say one of my favorite um descriptions of the role of the founder came from this description of Steve Jobs it says that Apple was just Steve Jobs with 10,000 lives oggy says that a great company is just the lengthened shadow the lengthened shadow of a great individual some agencies Pander to The Craze for doing everything in committee

they boast about teamwork and decry the role of the individual but no team can write an advertisement and I doubt whether there is a there is a single agency of any consequence so again goes back to his whole thing is like I I don't care about you the mediocre majority I care about Excellence right and the way you think about it is like an agency of any consequence so he's like not talking about the the agencies

that are ruled by committee only interested in competing with and being my peer group is excellent people right so he says they boast about teamwork and de cry the role of the individual but no team can write an advertisement and I doubt whether there is a single agency of any consequence which is not the lengthened shadow of one man or said another way apple is Steve Jobs with 10,000 lives then he continues on the theme that's really important to have

ridiculously like your entire you hold your team to ridiculously high standards and he says if you think that your business is performing badly don't beat around the bush speak your mind loud and clear disastrous consequences can arise when a Founder foots in his day-to-day dealings with his business it is better to say what you have just shown me is not up to your usual high standard please take another crack at it that's a great that's very diplomatic

actually right it's better to say what you have just shown me is not up to your usual high standard please take another crack at it at the same time you should explain exactly what you find inadequate about the submission do not leave your team to guess set high standards discourage bunting make it plain that you expect your agency to hit home runs and pour on the praise when they do and when I got to that part it reminded me

of this section from the forward so the forward of this book is written by an advertising guy who was like a young guy starting out his career in the early 1960s when this book was originally published and he read it when he was a young man and it like had a huge influence on like the the quality of his work throughout his entire career and I thought it was interesting because it it tells you a lot about OG's perspective

and what was important to him and it says uh ogave was an Englishman interested in baseball he would say don't bunt aim out of the park aim for the company of Immortals and in the world of advertising ogi did that he's in the company of Immortals and then ogave continues like not only setting high standards being excellent but you need to hustle you need to work with gusto as he always said this is under the subheading hurry uh most big

corporations behave as if profit were not a function of time when Jerry Lambert scored his first breakthrough with lisine which is a new product at this point he speeded up the whole process of marketing by dividing time into months instead of locking himself into annual plans Lambert reviewed his advertising and his profits every month the result was that he made \$25 million in eight years so that'd be what 10 probably 10x uh CU he's talking about

like 1950 \$60 uh so he says he made \$25 million in 8 years in Jerry Lambert's day the Lambert pH pharmaceutical company live by the month instead of by the year and then he repeats his observation not only that he sees inside of his company but he also sees with his best clients tolerate genius my observation has been that mediocre men recognize genius resent it and feel compelled to destroy it there are very few Men of Genius but

we need all we can find almost without exception they are disagreeable do not destroy them they lay golden eggs so then he goes into how to build a great advertising campaign and we're going to see that he had a lot in common with Napoleon if you heard uh episode the recent episode I did on Napoleon episode 302 uh it's called the mind of Napoleon it's just literally Napoleon speaking directly to you he's constantly referencing this is what Alexander did

this is what Julie Caesar J OK is the same thing I am an inveterate brain picker and the most rewarding brains I've picked are the brain of my predecessors and of my competitors I have learned much from studying the successful campaigns Napoleon repeat that over and over again he did it for himself when he's close to death he's like this is what I want my son to do like this is the the curriculum and education I have my son he like study

the great work that came before you uh so OG says your most important job is to decide what you are going to say about your product what benefit you are going to promise in Olan advertising which I have not read probably in 3 or four years maybe but I've read the highlights over and over again he said in ogan advertising that is the most important sentence in the book and he tells you to read it again that you have to figure

out the most important thing you do the most important thing you decide is what benefit you're going to promise another one of his maxims is the more you tell the more you sell give facts very few advertisements contain enough factual information to sell the product study the copy in Sear's catalog it sells a billion dollars worth of merchandise every year by giving the facts in my Rolls-Royce advertisements I gave nothing but facts no adjectives no gracious living the consumer is not a

she is your wife you insult her intelligence if you assume that a mere slogan and a few vapid adjectives will persuade her to buy anything she wants all the information you can give her when I was a door to door salesman I just he sold ovens door to door for God's sake when I sold uh when I was a door door salesman I discovered that the more information I gave about my product the more I sold Claude Hopkins made made

the same discovery about advertising 50 years ago but most modern copywriters find it easier to write short lazy advertisements because collecting facts is hard work so he wants you to collect facts but he says you cannot you

absolutely cannot bore people this is one of his most famous maxims here uh we make advertisements that people want to read you can't save souls in an empty church and then here's another one of his most famous maxims I have repeated

this in private conversations I'm not kidding a thousand times it is amazing how many times this comes up over and over again how many different things you can apply this to if you're lucky enough to write a good advertisement repeat it until it stops pulling scores of good advertisements have been discarded before they lost their potency this is the maximum maybe the one I is definitely the one I repeat the most in my day-to-day life the one I think about

the most you are not advertising to a standing army you're advertising to a moving parade three million customers get married every year the advertisements which sold a refrigerator to a new married couple last year will work just as successful to those who get married next year that is also why he would run the same ad in the same magazine for like 20 years cuz you're not at the idea that you think the same people are reading the magazine every

time or the same people see that happen to see that ad or are the same spot in their life where they actually need the the product that you're advertising you're you're crazy you're not advertising to a standing army you're advertising to moving parade this is so difficult for people to understand and to actually Implement because we're humans are obsessed with novelty so he says it takes uncommon guts to stick to one style in the face of all the

pressures to quote unquote come up with something new every six months it is tragically easy to be stampeded into change and then he has an entire section of the book on how to write really good copy and he spends an enormous amount of time talking about headlines and this is make sense why he spend so much time talking about headlines right here the headline is the most important element in advertisements it is the telegram which decides the reader whether to read

the copy five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy when you have written your headline you have spent 80 cents out of your dollar if you haven't done some selling in your headline you have wasted 80% of your money a change of headline can make a difference of 10 to one in sales I never write fewer than 16 headlines lines for a single advertisement every headline should appeal to the customer's self-interest

it should promise her a benefit he repeats that include your selling promise in your headline this requires long headlines research has found that headlines of 10 words or longer consistently sold more merchandise than short headlines the best headline I ever wrote contained 18 words at and this is the the best headline he ever wrote at 60 M an hour the loudest noise in the new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock and what's fascinating about that headline is the fact that you know he's

a big advocate of just doing more work than anybody else would he's a big Advocate about researching he was reading like I think he was on like page 50 or something of like this internal Rolls-Royce Rolls-Royce

engineering document where he came across that line if he had not done all that research and that reading that very few other people were willing to do he wouldn't have come up with the best headline he ever made in his entire

career more advice you should always include testimonials in your ad the reader finds it easier to believe the endorsement of a fellow consumer than the puffery of an anonymous copywriter keep your opening paragraph down to a maximum of 11 words a long first paragraph frightens readers away all your paragraphs should be as short as possible long paragraphs are fatiguing and a perfect description of that is the book itself it's full of short easy to read memorable paragraphs early in the

book he talked about the importance of repetition in building your company culture repeats it again in advertising the average consumer is subjected to over 10,000 advertisements a year make sure that she knows the name of the product being advertised in your commercial repeat it add nausea throughout he repeats the same idea so much he says that his sister suggested that the name of his Ad Agency should be changed to ad nausea Incorporated and then he gives a lot of

advice on how to rise the top I've told you before that I think the best talk available on YouTube for any founder is this presentation that bill Gurley gave a couple years ago I think it was at the University of Texas MBA students it's called Running Down a Dream how to succeed and thrive in a career you love and one of my favorite lines from that talk was that Bill said that you have zero excuse for not being the most

knowledgeable person in any subject that you want because this information is right there at your fingertips and we're going to see olvie echoing that very Sage advice after watching the career mishap of my own employees for 14 years I have identified a pattern of behavior which leads rapidly to the top first you must be ambitious set yourself to becoming the best informed man in your Agency on the account to which you are assigned if for example it is a gasoline

account read textbooks on the chemistry geology and distribution of petroleum products read all the trade journals in the field read all the research reports and marketing plans that your agency has ever written on the product spend Saturday mornings in service stations pumping gasoline and talking to motorists visit visit your clients refineries and Research Laboratories study the advertising of all of his competitors at the end of your second year you will know more about gasoline than your boss and you will be ready to

succeed him most of the young men in agencies are too lazy to do this kind of homework they remain permanently superficial nowadays it is fashioned to pretend that no single individual is ever responsible for a successful advertising campaign this emphasis on teamwork work is bunk a conspiracy of the mediocre majority no ad no commercial and no image can be created by committee most top managers are secretly aware of this and they keep their eyes open for those rare

individuals who lay golden eggs several years ago a client of ours asked their seven advertising agencies to submit papers on the television medium which was then quite new the other agencies put in adequate papers of

five or six pages but a young man on my staff took the trouble to assemble every conceivable statistic and working day and night for 3 weeks came up with an analysis which covered 177 Pages his lazy colleagues sneered at

him as a compulsive worker but one year later he was elected to our board of directors on such isolated incidents our most successful careers built and that is where I'll leave it highly recommend buying this book reading it spending some time Inside the Mind of David ogy you'll learn a lot and he'll hold you to a very high standard there's a link Down Below in the show notes if you want to buy the book using that link you'll be supporting the

podcast at the same time if you haven't already joined my email list that link is down below as well every week I email the top 10 highlights of every book that I read winnowing this book down to just 10 great sentences is going to be really really difficult because he's probably got 50 or 100 great sentences in the book but if you want to get an email every week for the top 10 highlights of the book that I'm reading the link to

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