Ep 83 - Interview: Orlando Wood, Author of Lemon and Look Out, on Why Showmanship Beats Salesmanship

MichaelAaron Flicker: [00:00:00] Welcome back to Behavioral Science for Brands, a podcast where we bridge the gap between academics and practical marketing. Each week we sit down and go deep behind the science of some of America's most successful brands. I'm MichaelAaron Flicker.

Richard Shotton: And I'm Richard Shotton.

MichaelAaron Flicker: And today we're sitting with Orlando Wood, Chief Innovation Officer at System One and the author of two books, lemon and Lookout.

Let's get into it. Orlando, welcome to Behavioral Science for Brands.

Orlando Wood: Well, Hello and thank you for having me. Wonderful to be here.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Richard and I are so excited for our talk today. We've been preparing and talking and chatting about what from all of the things that you've done and all of the things you've shared with the industry, we would focus our conversation on because we could fill, I think, many hours of podcast.

But we've committed to not doing that [00:01:00] today. And and I thought if okay with you before we get into our conversation let me give our listeners a little background on you and then we can, and then we can get into it.

Orlando Wood: Gosh. Please do. I'm interested. I'm all ears.

MichaelAaron Flicker: So as you know Orlando, you are the Chief Innovation Officer at System One.

You're an honorary fellow at the IPA, and your research has helped transform the industry's understanding of creative effectiveness and at the center of your work and things that Richard and I have most taken away is this argument that

you've made, that modern advertising has lost its ability to capture attention and create impact and that thesis.

Is critical to the listeners because our listeners are brand owners, chief brand officers, chief marketing officers. So we're gonna, we're gonna dive deep into this. Your two books, lemon and [00:02:00] Lookout have been critical to Richard and i's discussions on advertising effectiveness. You've recently launched advertising principles, explained APE for short.

APE for short. And it's a course designed to help marketers create more effective, memorable, and commercially successful advertising. My final bit of intro Orlando, and then I will, I will relent. No, I agree. Is that Please go. Is that you coined the term fluent devices and that work that you did on fluent devices have been seminal to so many marketers and how they think about the characters, the characters that are at the center of their advertising.

So much so that the newest company I created A Healthier For You Soda company named Fiz District has a little fluent device. His [00:03:00] name is Fizzy D and this little soda bubble character is at the center of all of our advertising. So we thank you for that. Yeah, thank you for that.

Orlando Wood: Oh, pleasure. That's lovely to hear.

MichaelAaron Flicker: It's been and, and if we get into it or not, it's been so compelling for the work that we've done and we're thrilled to have you. So welcome to Behavioral Science for Brands and our listeners love to start with Stories, Orlando. So we thought maybe we could ask. When did you first get interested in the world of marketing and advertising?

Maybe how did you get interested in studying effectiveness specifically? Where does this come from?

Orlando Wood: Yeah. Well, I suppose, I mean, I've always been interested in advertising. I remember, you know, as a child watching television and the great ad. There were many, many great ads in the 1980s and, and then into the nineties.

But, and, and talking about them with my dad, you know, and joke, laughing and, and, and [00:04:00] quoting them and, you know, all that kind of thing, you know, so there's Castle Main Forex ad, you know, that I remember very well. Now I can think we either did it on the sherry, you know where, where a very funny sort of ad.

And, and, you know, I've always, always loved it and loved the way that it understands and connects with audiences and understands their motivations. And sort of taps into them in a way that, that, you know, makes the brand memorable. Likable really, and feels familiar and, and, and, and, and a pleasure to be around.

I mean, that's really what, what advertising should I think, be trying to do and rewarding the audience for their attention and, and their effort, you know? And that, and some of that I think has, has gone, as you said, you know, over the last 20 years [00:05:00] ago as we've pursued a different kind of advertising so that, that.

It's always been there and I've, I've always thought of advertising as a, as, as quite a, a difficult thing to understand. And I suppose I've spent quite a long time trying to understand it and trying to explain how it works to other people, because there are so many different ways in which people think advertising works that, you know, you, you know, you look at, at, at any author on advertise that probably all have a very different or slightly different point of view on it, you know, and, and so just trying to articulate as best I can, how it works and the ways in which it works you know, is something that, that keeps me very interested and very entertained by it all frankly.

And if you're not enjoying yourself, well why bother? You know? So it's something that I, that I enjoy looking at, enjoy talking about, and enjoy looking for parallels in other [00:06:00] creative. Disciplines, whether it be art or in music or, or comedy. You know, there are things you can learn about, not just advertising, but about Live Franklin, about the way that we tick by looking at these different spheres.

And and that is something I enjoy very much.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Thank you for sharing that. And it's a, it's both on brand and very helpful to hear you say that your. Interest in advertising comes from an emotional connection, not just with the ads, but with sharing those ads with your dad. Exactly. And maybe, and to, to me, that is very in line with a lot of the major lessons you teach about what could make advertising more effective versus, you know, why we've maybe gone astray.

So you open the door for this conversation about two types of advertising two types of errors. Maybe you could explain that a little bit more to [00:07:00] our listeners.

Orlando Wood: Yeah, of course. Well look in my in my course in APE I talk about these two schools of advertising that have been there for a hundred, 150 years.

Probably one, perhaps slightly older than the other showmanship and salesmanship and they're terms that, you know, I use that I'm really inspired by. Brilliant. Paul Feld who, you know, talks about, uses those very two words. He comes on the course and talks about them, but I think they're just so helpful for understanding what this does, this kind of advertising does, and how it works and what it looks like and showmanship, you know, which I'm gonna talk about first because I think it's the older of the two.

You know, you can trace back to the 19th century. I've recently been looking at advertising posters, you know, perhaps the first mass medium [00:08:00] for, for advertising where you could sort of reproduce an ad, you know, in multiple places. And one that had to capture the attention of perhaps an, an you know, an audience that isn't necessarily in the market for your product right now.

But it had to be sufficiently interesting or beautiful to, to engage the passerby in the street. And so when you look back at the history of, of, of showmanship advertising, you can see that actually it, it, it, there's Pete Barnum and others you know, the sort of circus and showmanship type type people, PR people.

But you look back at advertising posters and if you look back to about 18 80, 18 90. In Paris, you see that, you know, it was the artists of the period living in and around Ma Marra, you know, where the Moin Rouge was, lanois, all of these incredible [00:09:00] cabaret theaters that, that, that the poster ad really starts to come into its own because there were, there were advances in lithography at the time, which meant you could.

Print large numbers of color ads. And so you get this explosion in, in Adver, the advertising poster. And artists like to lose Trek you know, AFA Muca and others. Very famous artists in their own rights, Pierre Bonar, who are creating posters that for the venues and the performers of the time, but also creating things that, you know, are really quite stunning and aesthetically interesting to look at.

And quite provocative, too many of them really capturing the sort of dummy mon and underbelly of, you know, sort of, of Paris at the time. So quite provocative. So you've got this sort of [00:10:00] artistic, world from which the advertising poster came. And of course, you know, manufacturers were quick to jump on the bandwagon.

And so these same artists were soon creating ads for cigarette paper, you know, for chocolates and, and everything else. But it all started in understanding the line, the color, the different types of color and ways in which you might, you know, do something arresting and interesting. So this is sort of the beginning, really, I think, of showmanship proper in advertising.

But then of course, you look over the ponds to the United States and you get quite a different school of advertising starting to emerge in 19 0 5, 19 10, you know, with Johnny Kennedy with Albert Lasker and and Claude Hopkins. And there you sort of see a [00:11:00] very different, very different mentality actually.

And it, it comes from this idea that, you know, you shouldn't attract general attention. You should only be speaking to people who are already half interested in, in buying from you, you know, otherwise it's a waste. And you need to give people a reason why they should buy. And, and actually through split test experiments in magazines and in, you know, print advertising, looking at coupon returns at the bottom of the ad, you start to work out, you know, which headline works better, which type of copy works better than the other.

Through these sort of coupon returns, these direct response coupon returns. And that's really the beginning of salesmanship. Advertising and this notion of scientific advertising that, you know, as Hopkins put in his book in 1923, you know, that time has come where [00:12:00] advertising can be defined as something of a science.

You know? And so you've got these two. It's really interesting 'cause you've got this sort of. Artistic hinterland for showmanship, and you've got this scientific sort of you know, I mean self-styled scientists you know, in salesmanship and that, that the two have always been sort of, you know, in competition with each other, competi.

But actually they, they both, I think, perform different roles and they fulfill each other. It's like the yin and yang, you know, sort of symbol that they, they support each other and actually showmanship makes your salesmanship work harder. And, you know, from recent work from Les Bette, Peter Field, you know, we can sort of have a sense now of the proportion.

Behind, you know, of, of your budget that you should put behind [00:13:00] showmanship, and it should be slightly bigger than the amount you put behind salesmanship. Now in today's language, you might call these things brand advertising showmanship and performance advertising salesmanship. They're

very, you know, that's, I use these terms because I don't think brand and performance are at all helpful in describing what we are doing.

And I think showmanship and salesmanship are actually a bit more, a bit more useful. So, so that's, that's, that's how I just think of the, the history of those two. And throughout the last a hundred, 150 years you've seen. How these ebb and flow, you know, the, the, the, the, the dominance of one or the other depending on the media available and how, and when media changes and new, you know, you get new medias, you, you often see a sort of one in the ascendants and one, one, you know, the other not, you know.

So I think, and that's what's happened so much as, as, you know, we've, we've mo we moved in the 1890s to the, to [00:14:00] 1910s another period where people followed the science. You get this shift towards salesmanship. I think we've seen the same in the last 20 years from a period that when you look back at the advertising of the eighties and the nineties, it was really, I suppose, quite romantic in a way.

Quite funny, quite engaging. And we've become much more transactional. Literal and linear in the way that we think, you know, that, that this will drive this thing, you know, and it's become quite salesmanship like and, and really that unless you're in the buying window, unless you are already warmed up to the brand in some way, that kind of advertising is inherently uninteresting to people.

And so you've, you've got to do the showmanship job as well just to get on people's mental shortlist in the first place. Just to be salient. Just to [00:15:00] be to, to, to create that preference, you know? 'cause it makes your salesmanship work harder.

Richard Shotton: Yeah. And, and all, Andy, you, you mentioned that there are.

Kind of some overlap between showmanship and salesmanship with brand and performance, but you, you've chosen a new kind of set of terminology 'cause you think brand and performance is a bit misleading.

Orlando Wood: I, I do. Yeah. Yeah. I think brand, well, I, so first of all, performance, you know, I mean,

MichaelAaron Flicker: it all ought to be,

Orlando Wood: yeah.

It's sort of yeah, it's, it's funny isn't it? You know, I, we'll perhaps come on to talk about the right and left hemispheres of the brain in a little while. And my, you know, my exploration of, of different modes of attention through Ian Mcg gilchrist's work. But that, that it sort of has the best words, doesn't it?

Salesmanship, I mean, it's always been focused on the word. Hopkins was all about the word and, and didn't believe in, in images particularly. And they were best avoided, you know, [00:16:00] unless absolutely necessary type thing. So, so yeah. I mean, performance I think is, is. Is, you know, it's claiming it's over claim, I think.

And brand just feels a bit, sort of nebulous and, well, what's that about actually, you know, so I think there's, I think it's important to talk about perhaps in slightly different ways. And to the layman or to anyone who's not in marketing or in advertising. And I know this 'cause I've spoken to people, you know, outside the industry and say showmanship and salesmanship and they immediately get it and say, yeah, I see what you mean by that.

MichaelAaron Flicker: How is this the same or different? You brought up Les Benet and pinner fields, the long and the short so that we have branded performance, long and short. Showmanship and salesmanship. Yeah. Are they relatively similar? Just more descriptive or is there important differences between the concepts?

Orlando Wood: Well, they, they, they are to all intents and purposes, very, [00:17:00] very similar.

They're, they're the same. Yeah. I just think it's a different language, you know,

MichaelAaron Flicker: a hundred percent.

Orlando Wood: And. That's important. Language is important for sort of shaping conversations, for being able to articulate what you're doing. You know, if you can't tell the difference between these two schools, how can you, how can you brief, how can you receive work?

How can you sell what you're doing in to your colleagues, you know, in your stakeholders if you haven't got the language? And, and I think that just makes it clear what, what we're doing here, really. And, and I should say that, you know, showmanship absolutely drives sales. And it does it straight away, but it's just that it's affects in endure and they last longer, you know, it could be decades.

Whereas salesmanship sort of works straight away or doesn't work at all, you know? Because it's only really gonna speak to people who are kind of half interested already in, in the [00:18:00] category or, or your brand. So, so yeah, that's, that's that's how I think about it anyway.

Richard Shotton: And, and, and your argument is more, I think than just, there's been an interesting historical shift to salesmanship that this has got, had a, had negative impacts on advertising effectiveness.

Is that right? Do you see this as a, as a problems?

Orlando Wood: That's right. I mean, you know, if you look at Peter Fields's assessment of advertising effectiveness over the last 20 to 30 years, you can see that in around 2006, 2008, advertising effectiveness started to fall. And that was at the time when people started you know setting shorter term objectives and started to focus more on.

Salesmanship as I would put it. And, you know, the types of effects start to, to change as well. So you, you know, that that has been, as he put it, a [00:19:00] cri it was a crisis, you know, in creative effectiveness. And he, he wrote in fact, that publication the same year I published Lemon, my, the first book that, that tried to explain from a creative point of view what had changed.

You know, what was it about the advertising that had, that had changed creatively. And that was, that was where I, you know sought to show and to explain how we are shift. We've shifted in our. In the sort of mode of attention we're, we're appealing to towards a very narrow kind of goal orientated attention towards the people who are, you know, I dunno if I'm buying a car, you know, then I'm gonna be interested in seeing this particular type of advertising, this salesmanship.

Whereas, you know, showmanship was there to create. Preference to lodge your brand in memory just to get you noticed and remembered and, and liked, you know, so that that salesmanship job would work, would work, [00:20:00] it'd be easier. So that, that was what Lemon was about really. It was about trying to explain this creative shift and how we'd move from narrative music.

We'd move from. You know, sort of showing connection between people humor towards sort of advertising that didn't play out in live time, but was short, sharp cuts, very tightly focused in on the product words on the screen telling us what to do. You know, nudging the sail. Very rhythmic soundtracks.

And, and I noticed that there was, this sort of, isn't this interesting? 'cause I looked at, I looked at Ian Mcg gilchrist's work, who's a psychologist or psychiatrist and neuropsychologist something of the philosopher as well. And he talks about these two modes of attention associated with the brain, right hemisphere and the left hemisphere.

This isn't the old 1960s, you know? Mm-hmm. One does emotion and creativity and the other one, [00:21:00] you know, is logical and analytical. It's a different way of, of thinking about it. And he, he. Describes these different modes of attention associated with the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere. And he talks about how the right hemisphere presents the world to us in the first place.

And then anything of interest, it sort of passes onto the left hemisphere to break it down and, and analyze it and manipulate it. And he talks about how the right hemisphere understands people, social context, the living. It understands narrative metaphor, humor, music, things that unfold in lived time and.

It, it, it understands expression in the voice and body, and the left hemisphere is very bad at all of those things. It's, it's much more literal. It [00:22:00] likes to categorize things to, to break things up into smaller parts. It's, it's, it's, you know, it, it controls and manipulates things. Language is one of its tools.

It loves tools and things. It can't really deal with people or understand facial expression, those sorts of things. And it, and it, and it, you know, it doesn't understand music. Only very basic rhythm. So you know, when you put those two things together and what Ian was describing in those two types of attention, broad beam, right hemisphere, narrow beam, left hemisphere with these two schools of advertising.

And you get to the point where you think, well actually showmanship is there to capture the broad beam attention of the right hemisphere to lodge you in memory. The right hemisphere is better connected to the limbic system, which helps us to understand, feel, emotion helps us to express emotion better too.

[00:23:00] It's also more associated with memory particularly. Episodic memory as opposed to semantic memory. Whereas the, and the left hemisphere, you know, narrow beam attention, that's what salesmanship is there for, to kind of nudge the, the, the goal orientated half interested attention of the left hemisphere.

And so it sort of helps to explain what you need to do for those two schools of advertising in your creative. And it helps to explain what, you know, what

showmanship is about. Really. It gives language to showmanship, to the right, to right hemisphere. 'cause the right hemisphere doesn't have language really.

So I suppose I'm trying to translate in for business commerce why showmanship works and how it works and what you need to do to connect with audiences. So that hopefully sort of, and in the course I talk about these two types of tension and how they support [00:24:00] these two schools of advertising. And I think help to explain why these two schools exist and have existed for so long

MichaelAaron Flicker: and, and to build on this conversation, I think we've often heard that the long advertising is healthy for showmanship, for, you know, for making emotional connections, getting on to the consideration list, being able to be recalled and the short will.

Initiate action. But actually Orlando, you're saying no, no, the long can initiate action right away. It's not that, it's not, that one is about emotion and one is about action. You're saying actually showmanship has the opportunity to drive a commercial result in that moment as well.

Orlando Wood: Absolutely. And I think, you know, the long and the short of it is absolutely wonderful publication and you know, Peter and Liz are great friends and the wonderful people and but I do think.

We should probably start calling them [00:25:00] lasting effects rather than long term effects. Because long term sort of suggests you've gotta sit around twiddling your thumbs for two years before anything starts to happen, you know? And actually they're lasting effects because they. They start happening pretty much straight away, but they, they continue to, to work because there are people who are outside the buying window who will come into your category, come into your you know, your sector and, and you will be front of mind and top of mind for them when that happens.

And so then your salesmanship can work really hard on them to do that. So there's, there's this sort of, this gradual build, you know, that you see over many years that comes with show showmanship that you won't get so much with salesmanship, which is sort of short term, you know, sort of always on spikes, you know, that, that, that, that, so that's, that's, that's really the difference between the two.

Richard Shotton: Yeah. You, you, you've talked. [00:26:00] A lot about the kind of broad theory of, of, of showmanship. Moving on to the specifics, one of the areas I've heard you talk about before is that humor is a phenomenal,

important part of, of showmanship and it, and it's very, very a, a effective in the advertising realm.

Have, have you got any evidence of that or is that more of a, a, a logical argument?

Orlando Wood: Yes, I have. I mean, we've looked at, in fact, I did this with Peter Field in my book lookout. We looked at you know, various characteristics of advertising on the IPA's effectiveness database and have found that humor humorous campaigns, you know, are more likely to drive business effects.

And, you know, there's, there's been in our own testing at System One, you know, the company I I work at we see time and again, how humor is, is, is extremely. Helpful and, [00:27:00] and bound up with, you know, kind of emotional response. I mean, if you, if you think about it, humor does three things really. Or if you're creating an ad that, that, that is designed to create a humorous response, you, you are probably presenting a situation where something is a bit odd or incongruent.

So the, the, the, the, the viewer is trying to figure out what's going on. So, so it, so it sort of captures the tension 'cause it's probably unusual and unexpected and you're trying to work out what's going on as a viewer. Once you've worked it out, you know, you make a connection. You're, you're, you're literally, you rich, I've seen you write about it, the generation effect.

You know, you're creating a, you're literally creating a, a, a new memory, a new connection, you know, in the brain because people are putting two and two together and then you are rewarding. People think, well, oh, this is, you know, oh, I got it. You know, I'm, I'm laughing to [00:28:00] myself. So it, it creates a effect, you know?

So it's attention, memory, and effect. You know, three things. Who wouldn't want that in their advertising? I mean, it's crazy. And then humor's been disappearing, you know, from advertising. You look at the creative awards. If you look at the data that we've collected in our testing at System One, you know, in line with this shift to performance, this literal transactional style of advertising, and I suspect also the, the rise of purpose advertising over this, you know, last 15 years, we've seen a move away from the humorous towards the worthy.

And you know, that, that humor is the thing that draws people towards you. And that, that, that, that, you know, you see it in the office if someone's telling a

joke, not that people do this anymore, but when you see people telling jokes, you know, the whole office kind of draws, comes, draws in, doesn't, don't they, you know, and then [00:29:00] you know, you, you also, there's this wonderful quote.

GG GK Chesterton said, you know humor gets in under the door while seriousness is still fumbling at the handle. And that's so, so good. So true. And it, and it sort of gets in at a deeper level. It's sort of an implicit level that conveys a deeper kind of truth or meaning, and that that is, and does it hugely effectively.

So yes, humor is effective and we should be using it more. Yeah.

Richard Shotton: I, I I love that GK Chester quote. The other quote that I've heard you say a few times is the the Sarki one in baiting a mouse trap with cheese. Yes. Always leave room for the mouse. Yes. Could, could you explain what you you mean by that and why it's so important?

Orlando Wood: It, it's a great, it's a [00:30:00] great quote and, howard Gossage also said it a great creative in the 1950s and sixties. And he, what is, what he was suggesting and what I think is so true is that, you know, whereas in salesmanship advertising, it's sort of like you're pushing out information, you know, you know, buy this because, you know in showmanship you have to leave something for the audience to do.

So you've gotta get them to sort of join the dots between things so that they're making the connection and it's going into memory. So, you know, when baiting the track with cheese, always leave room for the mouth. You've gotta give the audience something to do. Don't forget the audience. You know, it was one of the things that Ogilvy that you know, that, that that, that burn back all of the, all of the greats from the creative revolution, you know, would've said, you've gotta respect your audience and respect their intelligence and let them [00:31:00] do some of the.

The work, you know, because they, they'll get that kind of reward from it so that you are not an imposition, you are actually something that they welcome into their, into their lives, you know, so that, that's very important.

MichaelAaron Flicker: There's a lot of ways we could take this conversation next, but one of the critical ones that's a recurring theme over lots of episodes is how do you do research with your brand?

Know if it, if the work is being effective and System one has built quite a bit a big point of view on this Orlando. Yeah. And I think very much informed by some of the conversations we're having. So maybe can you share your experience between can you share your experience on how you think research is most effective and maybe how it connects to the conversation we're having here?

Orlando Wood: Hmm. Well, one of the [00:32:00] things that, that we do at System One and have done for, for a number of years is look at emotional response to advertising. And the reason we do that is because it is a great proxy for a number of different things. It's a great proxy for attention because orientates your a attention really it, it helps put things in memory.

So it's very, very good proxy for, for memory and it's a proxy for effect and, and preference as well. And so when you think of those things, you think, well actually, you know, emotion is, is absolutely critical for measuring effectiveness. And certainly we've shown in, in our work when looking at against other data sources for, you know, campaigns, the relationship between.

Emotion on the one hand, and growth on the other, and importance of not [00:33:00] making dull you know and tedious advertising that you've got, you've gotta connect, you've gotta put on a show. It comes back to that metaphor again. You know, gotta put on a show that's going to entertain people and interest people that's gonna be arresting and, and, and, you know, enjoyable.

And on some level it doesn't have to be laugh out loud, you know, it just, it's just something that, that, that. That creates a connection that, that people feel that you've understood them somehow. So, so yes. What you see time and time again is that when you've got highly emotional advertising is that you are much better able to create salience, fame, trust, some of these things that then translate into to growth relative to your amount you are spending.

So growth rate as I call it. And while salesmanship, a salesmanship doesn't tend to be quite so [00:34:00] emotive it tends to, to, to sort of nudge people towards a sale where perhaps with more, perhaps with more information, reasons why you should buy. And that's very good at driving direct effects, but it doesn't create these broad and lasting effects and, showmanship, you know, will create some direct effects too. But it it, it, because salesmanship is so geared towards the people who are already half interested in you, you know, it's, it's better at creating that immediate response. So, so you, these two schools, they, they compliment each other. And you find that, you know, you need to be, really, need to be creating an emotional response.

For these, for these, the biggest, the broad lasting effects, the growth rate that I'm talking about,

MichaelAaron Flicker: is it overly simplified And maybe [00:35:00] you can help build on this theory that your emotionally led showmanship advertising ought to be in your broad media, your tv, maybe your posters, your billboards, and your salesmanship.

Messaging ought to be on shelf talkers at the point of purchase. Mm-hmm. At the moment of clicking for an ad to get you to a website where maybe you'll convert if you're not in a grocery store, in a retail store, is that too simplistic to say they work together in that way? Is there more to it than choosing the right medium for the right message?

Orlando Wood: Yeah, I mean, I, I think there's some truth in what you say. I mean, you look at any medium and, and it can, and it can cr and, and it can be used, you know, for both, in both, for both schools, if you like. It's just that mm-hmm. A medium that excels in one, it, it [00:36:00] probably won't excel in the other. So I think I, you know, if you think about what, what showmanship is there to do, it's there to, you know, capture the attention of people who, who.

Perhaps aren't necessarily interested in your, even your category at the moment and to lodge you there, you know, and, and to create that preference. And so if you're doing that and it's there to create reach, you know, it's broad beam attention. Yep. Across broad reach media and. That's, that's what it, that's that's what it is.

And actually when you think of that kind of advertising and think of any ad that, you know, the, a great brand building ad that you, you might remember, it tends to start creatively quite broad so that anyone could be interested in what's going on when you watch it, you know, think of any Snickers ad for instance.

It's like, what's going on here? You know, [00:37:00] this is intriguing. You know, guy, people sitting round on the sofa or you know I don't know Joan Collins or Aretha Franklin in the car. Yeah. You know, I mean, what's going on here? You know, it starts broad. 'cause anyone could be interested in that and anyone will be interested in that.

And then it gradually narrows into, I get it, I get it. You know, and there's a sort of deeper truth to it, you know, like, not you, when you're hungry, that's what it is, you know, whereas salesmanship. It doesn't have so much to do in such a short space of time and it, and it's, you know, 'cause it, it can kind of rely on you

being half interested already and the ability to target people in the last 10, 15 years that we've, 20 years, you know, we can target people I think pretty tightly now.

I think that's made us creatively lazy because that, that, that means that we can almost rely on their interest. Do you know what I [00:38:00] mean? Yes. You know, so, so, so therefore we don't have to attract their attention and therefore. We've got a, a generation perhaps, of marketeers who've grown up in this performance salesmanship world who perhaps aren't so familiar with showmanship, with what you have to do to create preference because they're so focused on proving superiority.

So, you know, how do you, how do you, and that's why I created the course because it was, it's there to try to help people see what showmanship is, what it does its effects, and, and how you might go about it and prove it or, or give evidence to help support you make its case, you know, in your organization.

MichaelAaron Flicker: A third rail concept that maybe we can pick another podcast to talk about is not just American politics, but all political campaigns that have focused more on converting those that are already closest to your point of view rather than.

Broad [00:39:00] based, inclusive political basis. Richard and I have a unofficial life, lively debate about politics in the uk, the US and around the world. And you know, there's so many interesting applications of what we're talking about here, Orlando, not just for commercial application and brand building, which is the topic of this podcast, but thinking about, you started the podcast by saying there's implications in life and in other areas.

And I can't stop thinking about how political advertising over the last 30 years has changed pretty dramatically in a similar bent.

Orlando Wood: Yes, I think it has. And I think actually. You, you see, and I think you do see this sort of shift towards a kind of more narrow left brain operational sort of transactional thing in all walks of life.

It's not just advertising, you know, you see it in, in, in everything from films and music to, you know, car [00:40:00] colors. I talk about in my book, look out, you know, everything's become gray and black and you know, silver, where do the colors go, folks? You know?

Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Orlando Wood: You see it, you know, pretty much everywhere.

And to anyone who sort of lived, I think in the. Eighties and nineties. I think there has been this, you know, you can sense it, you can sense some change on some level that is not altogether comfortable. And you know, and actually I think you saw something similar in about 1900, 19 0 5, by the way, if you look at, at art and the modern modernist movement, avant-garde movement at that time, I do this in my book, look Out, you see how the stair became extremely common in, in avant-garde art and also the breaking down of things into smaller parts, Picasso and others.

But you, you, you see that stair in advertising too. You know, there's so many ads today particularly, you know, about three or four years ago where you just got, you know, [00:41:00] blank stare almost coercive, you know, really unpleasant actually, you know, and the absence, complete absence of an idea. Just the blank stare.

And that, you know, it's sort of a bit sinister in, in a sense. And, and that's one of the things I talk about in Lookout is how do we, how do we put that expressivity, that emotion, that narrative back into advertising, that charm that understands human motivation. So yes, I think in all walks of life and, and, and in political advertising too I, I suspect that is the case.

You know, I, I, I think back to Hal R's Reagan campaign, you know, good morning, it's morning in America. You know, that, that, that was a look, you, you watch that and now watch anything today, and you think, what a different world and what a different way of talking to people. I think you're fundamentally [00:42:00] different.

Richard Shotton: I think you're right that there's an awful lot of overlap between commercial advertising and political advertising. He might be less familiar in America, Michael Arum, but Tony Blair's kind of right hand man kind of communications chief was Alistair Campbell head of this famous phrase.

You know, it's only when you as a communicator are completely sick to death of talking about an issue that it's finally landing. Now, that idea about the need for kind of repetition is something I've heard you talk about a lot. Not in the realms of politics, but in the realms of commercial brands.

So you've got this lovely phrase, familiarity breeds contentment Yes. Rather than contempt. Yes. Yes. Could, could you explain what you mean by that and, and why advertisers should, should apply it?

Orlando Wood: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, it's, you know, I sort of came up with this three [00:43:00] simple words to help us remember, you know, what we really in the business of doing as marketeers and I I just describe them as fame, feeling and fluency.

And they're really the sort of the emperors amongst the, the, the, the sort of heuristics I suppose. You know, fa fame is sort of salience and, and making sure you are kind of top of mind feeling is, you know, the affect heuristic and making sure that you know, you are, you are, you are making people feel good really, because that, that means that, you know, they'll instinctively go towards you rather than someone else.

And then there's fluency, which is, which is the sort of fluency heuristic. So it's, the ability to know what you are looking at, recognize it, and, and that helps you by the way, to, to, to think of it first as well. You know, so there's sort of these [00:44:00] three things really kind of go together and familiarity.

I would put in that, in that camp. Really familiarity, sort of all of those things, isn't it? Fame, feeling and fluency. 'cause we tend to like things that are familiar generally speaking, because they're safe, you know, I suppose if you think about it. So yeah, I think that that familiarity, breed contentment is very.

Very important And, you know, Leo Burnett said, he talked about the glacier of friendly familiarity, you know, in the characters that he created and in just generally the advertising that he created that came from the Chicago School, you know, that, that, that sort of warmth and familiarity that came with, with, with a lot of his work, a lot of Leo Burnett's work.

And it's absolutely important. And, you know, I mean, system one's done some work recently. [00:45:00] Looking at consistency and the importance of consistency over time and how it has compounding, you know effects. I, I looked at it in my work on fluent devices, you know, this term to suggest characters that are repeatedly used or scenarios that are repeatedly, we talked about Snickers a minute ago.

That would be a good example of that. Characters might be the Geico gecko or the, or, you know, I dunno, in the uk, the, the compare the markets, meca, you know, those, those, those sorts of devices, fluent devices, very important. And

the, the important, I think the really important thing about them is that they live, and that's in intrinsically interesting to people.

They're part of the show because logos, fonts, shapes, colors, important as they are. They're really just signs and symbols. For the left hemisphere, and they flatten things and they're not there. [00:46:00] There's no ca, there's no, they don't live. So they don't help to capture attention as, as well as something that lives.

And that's why a, a living character or a living scenario that you understand the context of, you know, that really for the right hemisphere, that's part of showmanship. That's the showmanship way really. That, and music, I think I would include in that too. That's the showmanship way of creating familiarity and fame and fluency and feeling, and it, it really is important.

Now, I will also say that you do need novelty as well. And the great thing about the fluent device, so the character or the scenario is that, you know, it's a bit like you, you transpose it to a different key in music, you know, but it, it, it, the, the tune is still there.

MichaelAaron Flicker: So you still, a character can have a new adventure every time, even though a new adventure, it's the same character,

Orlando Wood: a new adventure, but there's a, there's a, there's a familiarity [00:47:00] there as well.

And so it, it does, does both the job of novelty and, and freshness, but it also brings things back to, you know, what the core brand and what it's all about.

Richard Shotton: And would it be fair to say those are, are doing different things there, so the novelty gets attention, but the familiarity gets warmth and likability?

Would that, would that be fair?

Orlando Wood: Yeah, I think they, they do. Yeah. And, and the I mean the novelty also can, can, can create, you know, affect as well. But yeah, you're right. You're right. I mean they, they, it sort of manages to, to, to, to kind of do everything. And then when you've got a character and you've established a character, you know, you can use those on, on fairly low attention media where you might only have a few seconds to sort of establish who you are straight away.

And actually there's a chance, and the work I've done [00:48:00] shows this, that you're gonna pay attention for longer as well because you've got a character that's doing something interesting. The living, you know, at the heart of this, we know that the living, you know, advertising with the living in it is more likely to drive attention and, and emotional response.

So that, that really important, you know, and there's the abstraction that goes with salesmanship and left hemisphere advertising. Will literally push people away. You know, well, not literally, but physically, but sort of they push their gaze away, shall we say so that they're not looking anymore and unless they're already, you know, warmed up to the brand or the in, in the window, in the buying window.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Another connection that I've been thinking about as you've been talking Orlando, is that familiarity has a way of breeding nostalgia, and Richard and I have talked about how if you feel nostalgic, if you have this familiarity feel, you might be even less price sensitive. You [00:49:00] have this more of a sense that you're willing to pay more for something that that, that you have familiarity with.

And maybe it's some nostalgia over

Orlando Wood: That's right. That's right. The fluent fluency. You know, if you establish fluency. And I showed this in my work with Pete Field. If you've got, you know, in particular fluent character, you know, there's a suggestion in the IPA data that you, you, you, you are much less price sensitive, that you reduce price sensitivity.

And that's one of the important ways in which SHOWMANSHIP works, is that it strengthens price, which means that you can continue to charge a margin, you know, and, and, or, or even increase your margin, maybe. But, but there's a, that, that, because people are, are working on feeling, they're working on affect and, and so they're not thinking, you know, how much does this cost relative to the other, that they're sort of more instinctive in the way that they make the decision.

And that's, that's why it's one of the great strengths of showmanship. But you're right. And of things I wanna say about nostalgia is that. [00:50:00] It's something that the right hemisphere is according to him. Mcg Gilchrist is particularly attuned to. And at the heart of it is this sense of yearning for another time or it could be another place.

And. And it's, it's a bit like homesickness. Homesickness is, is very similar to nostalgia, really in, in the sort of thing that it is, you know, and, and the right hemisphere yearns, whereas the left hemisphere wants. And so the, this sort of yearning a and this sort of slight, this sort of, and that's what was at the heart of romanticism, the movement romanticism was this yearning for place, for time, for you know, another world you think, think back to, you think if you think this has got nothing to do with advertising.

Anyone who was around or, or, or has been around in the uk. Well remember the Hovis ad from 1973 with the boy on the bike going [00:51:00] down the hill on the cobbled lane. You know, it was sort of set in the past and it was the middle of recession really in 1973. And they created this sort of feeling around.

The, the brand through dvo Jack's New World Symphony, playing on, you know, sort of the brass band and the background, all about yearning, yearning for time, for place, for a different time, escapism really, and you know, hugely successful ad and one that you know, everyone, it, it's been had in recent, recent years, remade you know, that, that is extremely ripe brained and, and.

Connection between people, between people and place, between people and time. You know, historical advertising, you know, that kind of advertising, but you don't see so much anymore. But you used to see p advertising set in the past quite a lot, you know, characters relating to each other and in a different period, you know and humorously [00:52:00] so well that, you know, all of that is immediately interesting to the right hemisphere 'cause it's trying to work out the social context.

What's going on here? Why are these people dressed like that? Why are they doing that? Why are they speaking funny? You know, all of that is, is interesting. It's part of the show

MichaelAaron Flicker: and we had on the show a, a little bit ago Nir Eyal, who's the author of a book Hooked, and he says that every product needs to meet a psychological need.

Like it has to solve some psychological need. And something that you're talking about here is. How does it solve not just a practical need, but at the heart of romanticism yearning for a time or place? How does that, how can an add satiate that psychological need for something that you, that you connect, you want to connect with?

Orlando Wood: Yeah, absolutely. You know and I don't, I don't think you don't see a great deal of advertising that that [00:53:00] does that brilliantly, I don't think at the moment. But yeah, I think, I think a need that psychological need is, is, is, you know, burn back said you've gotta understand people's motivation.

You know, you've gotta tap into a motivation and people get a vibration from an ad before they read it or before they've even taken it in, you know? And so how do you do that? You know, love at first sight type thing. And, and so that, that, that, and it comes from that sort of instant right hemisphere presencing of the world.

You know, what's hap what's, what's going on here, you know? And so yeah, I agree. Motivation, understanding, motivation, really important. And so often isn't it, isn't it the case that, you know, a lot of people on boards tend to be more operationally focused and internally focused and, you know, it's [00:54:00] perhaps only the marketeer who's looking out, you know, at, at, at, at the customer.

And, and so boards tend to become very focused on the product. And so it's, it's much easier sale to do salesmanship advertising 'cause it's pushing out why your product's so brilliant. But what we need to do and what burn back I think did very well was turn the telescope round and, and look at the product.

Through the audience's eyes and to make it feel like, you know, this is something that, that, well, why wouldn't we want this? You know? And that, that, that's the marketeers role really, because I think we do get really stuck. In organizations, in focusing in on ourselves. That's why, partly why my second book was called Lookout.

'cause you've gotta, you've gotta look out at the audience. You've gotta think about how this looks from their point of view. They're not interested in your brand most of the time. They're not interested in you, in, in, in [00:55:00] products, you know, except when they need them. So you've gotta be interesting, arresting, engaging, and find a way to look at, look at yourself in a sort of, he believed in being self-deprecating.

You know, having a sense of self-awareness at the very least about what you're doing and, and putting and, and, and having a sense of proportion about how important you are because people get very bored of, of listening to people, you know who, who are self-important all the time. So self-awareness and that sense of, you know, humility, I guess that Burn Back had in his copy and his, his advertising, the think of those VW Beetle ads, you know, lemon. Brilliant. You

know, because it, it's, it's, you've talked about this too, Richard. You know, this, you know, this sort of, sort of, so the, what's the term's called? The practical effect.

Richard Shotton: So, but the interesting thing there, exactly, the prac, exactly [00:56:00] the Pral effect was first experimented on in 1966 by Elliot Aaronson at Harvard, and he came up with this experimental way of showing that a small flaw made you more appealing. But interestingly, you've been quo, burn back, burn back in 1959.

Said a small admission gains a large acceptance. So often the great creatives, the great absolutely planners, the ones that have been looking out and paying attention of what influences people. Yeah. They've come up with these ideas before the academics.

Orlando Wood: Yeah.

Richard Shotton: Hmm.

Orlando Wood: No, I mean that, I mean, and, and he was, he was, he said, you know, we're very happy to appear self-deprecating about our product if it serves us in.

I proving a greater truth about, you know, what we're about type, I'm paraphrasing, but it was along those lines. And you know, it's a bit like easy. Yeah, not easy Jet, sorry, Ryanair then their, in their advertising recently on TikTok, you know, they, they sort of laugh at them. Someone will ask, [00:57:00] you know, do, do you provide free wifi?

You know, and then they have a little laughing face on the, on the front of the plane, you know, as if. You know it's playing to their, it's playing to their strengths. You know, it's playing to what?

Richard Shotton: It's not a random weakness that's being admitted as you say, it serves a greater truth. No, you admit that the idea of wifi is ridiculous and it really lands the message that, well, you must be darn cheap.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Yeah.

Orlando Wood: Hmm. That's really good on cheapness then. Yeah.

MichaelAaron Flicker: I hate to end our conversation 'cause this has been a lovely a lovely chat. Orlando, I, the last point you made about a marketeer mission may be a high note to end on, but let me ask one final question. If you wanted marketers to take one big principle away from the work that you have been focused on and that they could implement, what would it be?

What would you [00:58:00] want them to, to stay focused on as they end the podcast and they go back to their day jobs of trying to build their brands and build their companies? What, where would you focus their attention?

Orlando Wood: Yeah. Well, I would say that. You know, you have to put on a show and that your show needs to be more interesting, more entertaining, more arresting than the content that surrounds you.

And if you do that, you are, you, you are already a long way ahead. And that's that's very important and. The work that, that I do and I've done, I think, gives you a sense of a flavor for what that show might look like. So anyway, I hope, hope it's helpful and and thanks very much for having me, guys.

MichaelAaron Flicker: Thank you. Thank you. So as we always do, we will take the conversation from today in our show notes. We're gonna have links to the things Orlando raised, the conversations we've [00:59:00] had. And we would double underscore for all of our listeners. Advertising principles explained.com is the course that Orlando has mentioned.

They have a new cohort coming out September 22nd if you'd like to join that. But either way, please take a, take a look at the course and so much of what we talked about today will be featured there. And until next time, we say thank you to Orlando for being with us. Thanks to Richard and Orlando for a great conversation.

If you'd like this podcast, please give us a comment, give us a, a follow and share it with other marketers who are just as interested as we all are in these important topics. Thanks for coming on Orlando and being with us today.

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