

had succeeded in knocking a bit more off the price of an artist, a printer or a publisher. The consequences did not matter; the advertising man was satisfied if the director was pleased with his work—the director was satisfied if the result was “about the same” as achieved by his rivals. For the remarkable obsession that the others always do better and judge wiser than oneself is incurably dominant in all merchants who lack the courage and the brains to strike out on paths of their own.

Finally we cannot omit to mention that the lively political campaigns which persisted ever since the close of the war have had a good deal to do with weakening advertising forms and increasing their banality. Here we had to do with another disturbing element—party feeling! It was not so much a question of whether the advertising man was particularly capable, the decisive question was whether he belonged to the party interested. The adherents of every variety of party group made the most of their opportunities and were usually sharp and unprejudiced enough to change their adherence in time when a star began to pale out of the party firmament.

That is why we say: Get back twenty years! Advertising must become real advertising once more. Bargainers and hagglers will no longer be able to offer allurements to the manufacturer. Success will come only to the man who makes his offer so attractive and interesting that it can arouse the public from its lethargy born of satiety. Advertising has shouted at the public until it is deaf.

The present situation resembles that of twenty or twenty-five years ago. The posters of those days, reproduced in these pages, were all materially successful at the time. Their effect was sensational, because they represented a new and refreshing note in the mass of sugary and trashy designs which were prevalent at the time.

There is enough trash to be seen to-day, and we hear enough complaints from business men. Artists capable of better things sit emptyhanded waiting for commissions. Let the man who is looking for big sales see to it that he gets hold of something which really interests the masses and gives them pleasure—like the posters of twenty years ago.

Trans. by E. T. Scheffauer.

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Prof. PAUL
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