

## Statistical comparative illustrations

The use of gas, coal and electricity for cooking

Design  
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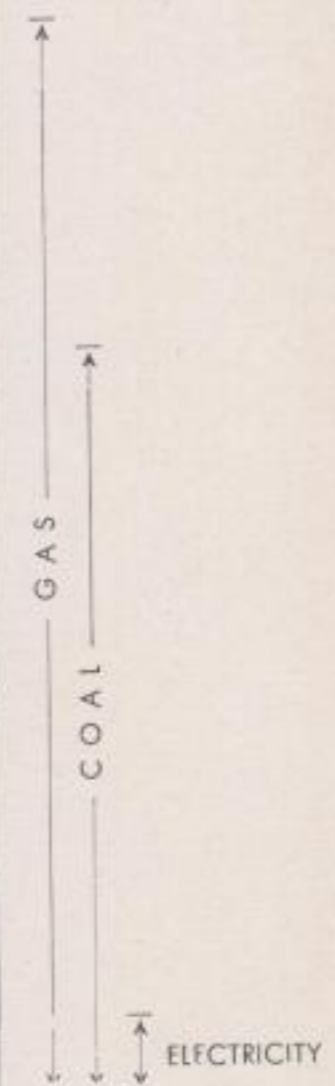


Photo: Gert Pfankuch

## ADVERTISING STATISTICS BY DR. ANITRA KARSTEN

One of the most important principles of advertising, according to Claude Hopkins, is:

"Never make too much fuss about yourself. You ought to sell the product and not yourself. Never disguise a fact, and use the shortest words. Every sentence must sound honest. Only offer services, for that is the only thing that people want. Estimate the value of every sentence in accordance with this principle. Don't waste advertising space or money on any other purpose."

One fundamental conception of statistics is the statistical mass, and its simplest form of expression is the total. This is by far the most frequent form used in advertising. The 'visiting card' then states: The firm A has X marks of share capital, or workmen, or machines, or Y branches in "all parts of Germany" or in "60 countries"!

There is not much to be said about the value of such a form of advertising; especially in advertising one must have a clear idea of what the importance of the correct inclusion of an argument is. It is only in the rarest cases that the actual fact is apparent. Even as regards the external form questions arise, such as: What is a "large number" in this connection; what is "more" — "96 branches" or "about (nearly) 100 branches" or "branches in all, "every", 15 parts of the town"? It is also a question of whether a fresh and important factor has been introduced when an increase in the number of customers or testimonials, etc. is mentioned. In the latter case a number has an almost magical effect. How is this to be properly used in order to make it effective? As E. Wagemann says in "Narrenspiegel der Statistik" (Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg, 1935) "a series arranged in one way or other, or an expression composed otherwise can serve (i. e. as a form of expression of a statistical mass)". Such composite expressions of the mass

of course mean their statistical analysis ... hence we can also describe them as a statistical explanation of a statistical mass."

These more developed forms of expression are playing a constantly increasing part in advertising. They make their appearance in the representation of the development of an undertaking, of the extension of its sphere of activity, in comparisons of all kinds, etc.

The prerequisites for recording statistics, the methods of collecting and utilizing them, and the different sources of error cannot be dealt with here. But the advertising expert must make himself thoroughly familiar with them in order that he can decide when and how he can use statistics for his purposes, when a typical example is sufficient and when a "conglomeration" is more effective. The estimation of the value of statistics in advertising depends on the advertiser's skill in making them effective in a larger connection. What Rolf Wagenführ demands of market analysis in "Statistik leicht gemacht" (Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg, 1934) also applies to statistics in general: "The principle for the correct execution of an analysis must be to base a judgement solely on the general effect of all available data; errors of judgement are otherwise unavoidable." It is only a general survey that makes it possible to arrive at a correct estimation of each individual case. Each individual fact first assumes importance in a general connection which has to be discovered and elucidated.

As compared with other advertising arguments, statistics have the advantage that they represent a definite and clearly defined fact. A definite statement is always more effective in advertising than a general indication, while the elucidation of a larger connection is more interesting than information regarding the present state of the firm X. But what a lot of