

Mr. John Wanamaker
Wanamaker's Department Store
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

March 1, 2014

Dear Mr. Wanamaker,

I apologize for my belated response to your request for help with your advertising problem. As you might recall, you said, "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half." I have taken the liberty of equating your problem with the question: How can I pick the most effective advertisement for my purpose?

My response to this question is the product of considerable time and effort. Indeed, thousands of experimental studies conducted over a century were needed in order to obtain the knowledge to answer your question. I then spent eighteen years summarizing the knowledge to present it in a useful form for your employees in Philadelphia. A further three years were required to test the value of evidence-based principles for selecting the most effective ads. I hope that this delay has not caused you undue hardship.

I was inspired in this task by the magnificent progress made by doctors and engineers when they began to base their decisions on experimental evidence. I have endeavored to emulate their methods. Our "innovation" is called the Persuasion Principles Index, or PPI. It weighs nothing and it is free at adprin.com! Interestingly, the key idea to include all relevant knowledge was inspired by Benjamin Franklin. We call the general approach the "index method."

Once you have this innovation in hand, please provide it to any of your employees and instruct them to use the "self-training module." With less than two hours of training, the use of this tool will enable far better assessments of ad effectiveness than those now made by the judgments of your advertising experts.

We have labored for over two decades, expecting this innovation to be successful, but the degree of improvement has been beyond my wildest expectations. Compared with advertising experts, the use of the PPI reduced the error in picking the most effective advertisement by almost half. You will find the details in our paper, "[Predictive Validity of Advertising Principles.](#)"

I hope the Persuasion Principles Index will open up a new era in advertising. Our innovation not only provides a better prediction as to which ad is more effective, it also explains how to improve an ad.

Again, I apologize for the tardy reply.

Yours, in good health,



Professor J. Scott Armstrong
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