

PCNY Luncheon
The Advertising and Marketing Beat
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Stuart Elliott has been the advertising columnist of The New York Times since May 1991, writing the weekday advertising report as well as other news articles and features. He also writes a weekly e-mail newsletter, In Advertising, for the New York Times on the Web. Mr. Elliott has covered advertising, marketing and media topics for two decades; in addition to The Times, he has written on those subjects for USA Today, Advertising Age, The Detroit Free Press and The Times-Union in Rochester, N.Y. Mr. Elliott has freelanced for many publications, including Texas Monthly and Working Woman; speaks around the country; moderates panels, and has appeared on television programs like "Nightline," "Biography," "The News with Brian Williams" (MSNBC) and specials on networks including The History Channel, Showtime and VH1. Mr. Elliott received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern university in Evanston, Ill. He lives in Manhattan and his hobbies and interests include politics, popular culture, American history and nostalgia, especially old advertising.

Opening Remarks

Hello, everybody. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. It's a rare treat for me because I go out to lunch like twice a year and if it wasn't for the fact that the industry is already completely shut down for 2003 I wouldn't have been able to make it today. So, thank you, again.

I've worked for two of the three publications that are on the podium/dais/lectern over there with me. I've worked for USA Today and for Advertising Age, so I just wanted to endorse everything that they said. I remember all of those rules and stipulations and we have some of our own, obviously.

The Advertising column in the Times has been in the New York Times since about 1935 and contrary to how I look I have not been writing it that entire time. The column runs Monday thru Friday in the Business section, there is also a separate email newsletter that I do weekly that goes out called "In Advertising" that has separate content completely from the paper. That goes out every Tuesday and we have almost 90,000 subscribers to that. What we're looking for is sort of a blend of what everybody up there has talked about already. We write about the nuts and bolts stuff that goes on in the advertising and PR and direct marketing industries and the other ways of marketing communications. I've always thought the column ought to be called Marketing and Communication, but because it was named back in 1930-something it' called Advertising, but it really is marketing communications. And we try to write about the agencies and the clients, the nuts and bolts stuff, the accounts, the people, the takeovers, the acquisitions, the mergers. We try also to write more broadly on the more thematic topics like the creative trends, the sort of business-side trends, what's going on , consolidation, globalization, the search for, trying to reach the elusive younger consumer,

the shift towards nontraditional advertising and marketing because of TiVo and DVR's and the other new technologies. We want to hit some of those themes, at the same time we want to talk about the Crunchy Nugget account going from Grey to BBDO or wherever. Also, some of the other topics that we cover, too, again like these guys here, "Madison/Vine" type stuff, you know the efforts to try to reach consumers in new and different ways, buzz marketing, guerilla marketing and all of that.

Yes, we want exclusives also. Obviously with all the crowded and competitive marketplace made even more crowded and competitive by the websites that Advertising Age and AdWeek operate now that update one zillion times a day, exclusives are more important than ever before. Please don't pitch me something after you went to somebody else here on the dais and you were unhappy with how it turned out. Please don't pitch me that story again after it's appeared which I have had happen very often. Please don't think that I don't read the other publications because if I had a dollar for everyone who pitches me a story that was in BrandWeek that week or AdAge that week or even the Wall Street Journal or USA Today that week, I could retire and never have to stand up here and do these little lectures.

Know what we cover, I can only heartily endorse all of that. Please read the paper, see what's for us, it's not a mystery it's not a secret. If you just read the paper and look at the website and look at the email newsletter you can pretty much see what it is we're interested in. If I had a dollar, again, for all the emails I get that say, "There's an interesting New York angle to this story so please cover it!" and I'm thinking, "Hello! New York Times, national newspaper! International Herald Tribune, global reach, hello? Why would we care that somebody is in Larchmont?"

Again, don't call on deadline unless you have a really fantastic story. It is just so annoying when you're on deadline for a daily paper and working and trying to focus your attention on what you're trying to do to get somebody calling to check your mailing address, and to update the media contact list, and to pitch you for a story that isn't going to happen for six months or five years or whatever. And this happens all the time, I know you all think it's funny but it happens all the time and it's incredibly frustrating and it makes it very hard to do our jobs.

Some of the other things I wanted to touch on were already discussed, just again, read the publications. Figure out what it is that we want, try to work on exclusives, try to work on broader things as well as the nuts and bolts stuff, and try to remember that we're not writing about the curing of cancer here, this is just advertising and marketing and try and have a little fun with it all.

Thanks a lot.