

Speaker 1:

All right, let's get this fucking party started.

Speaker 2:

Yeah! Finally!

Speaker 1:

Welcome, everybody, this has been five months of stress, but enjoyable stress.

But it really came about, was February this year, Ed Dale gave me shit on Facebook about,

"When are you going to do this event in Europe"

And I was like,

"Fuck you, Dale."

Speaker 1:

So I contacted Bond and Ben and John Carlton, Fury Ed, everybody.

And said,

"Look, I'm thinking about doing this event for Drayton's 83rd birthday, and I'm sure he will do it. And so they all agreed, and I'd messaged Drayton by email. Now normally he responds to me within a day. I had nothing for about three days. I was going,

"Fuck you, Drayton."

Speaker 1:

So I sent an email and I copied his assistant in and his general manager. Of course they're going to respond straight away. And he's like,

"Well, yeah, I'm writing my book. My autobiography. So yeah, I'm busy. Give me some more details about this event. And I happened to be in London at the time, and he lives in Bristol.

And I was like,

"You got to eat, right?"

"Yeah."

"I'm coming to Bristol, I'm buying you dinner. We're talking about the event."

Speaker 1:

And so we sit down.

He's like,

"Before you get me drunk, how are you, Matt? Tell me about the event and the deal was cut."

So it's been since then and I appreciate you all coming from all corners of the globe to be at this event.

And most of you know of Drayton, but if you're like me, I didn't know who he was until 2009.

I'd been copywriting since 2001, although I'd read his name when I first started.

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And I was on a mentoring call with a UK client, and he said,

"Oh, Drayton Bird speaks very highly of you."

And I was like,

"Who the fuck's Drayton Bird?" My apologies.

Speaker 1:

I Googled his name and I was like,

"Holy shit, yeah, you're a dickhead."

And then he gave me a testimonial, and we've become friends from there, and then just over two years ago, he held his last ever full copywriting event.

And I was the only speaker he invited, which for me was quite an honour.

And so I've literally dragged him out of speaking retirement to be here, and when you got guys like John Carlton and Matt and Bond and Ben, Nick, everyone here, they all know him and all respect Drayton Bird.

And so, what he's going to share with you, today I know what he's doing. Tomorrow, it could be anything. But that's his privilege.

Speaker 1:

And by the way, today's actually his 83rd birthday, so please wish Drayton a happy birthday.

Speaker 1:

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As Ogilvy says, nobody knows more about direct mail than this man. And he's been in the game about, what, 62 years, roughly?

Drayton Bird:

60.

Speaker 1:

60 years. And he's pretty much shaped advertising as we all know it. So pretty much every major, big corporation, he's written copy for. So with that said, please come on up, young man.

Speaker 1:

Come on, you can walk faster than that. You're not that old.

Drayton Bird:

Well thank you very much.

Speaker 1:

We love each other, that's why I can say what I want to say.

Drayton Bird:

How kind of you to clap before I say anything, because afterwards you might wonder what the fuck you're doing here.

I wonder what the fuck I'm doing here.

Also I wonder how I manage to be standing up, because last night I was plied by a wicked, wicked leprechaun person with vodka, which I never normally drink, so I feel like shit.

Drayton Bird:

These are my introductory notes about what you've got to watch out for.

First of all, when I started writing, which was actually 64 years ago, they had just invented the fountain pen. So all this stuff is a complete bloody mystery to me.

So halfway through, you start seeing bits of pornography or photographs of strange places, it's my fault. So what shall we talk about?

Drayton Bird:

What I'd like to talk about is, what's fucking wrong with marketing, and the short answer is, almost everything.

I was talking in New Zealand a couple of years ago, and I pointed out to the audience that if doctors knew as little about medicine as marketers know about marketing, half the fucking population would die over a year.

Drayton Bird:

And what worries me even more is that it's getting worse. People are being trained to be morons. They're also being conned, but that's another story.

I'm going to play you something which I played first many years ago when I was speaking to the top people at American Express in New York.

And I wanted to appear cultured.

Drayton Bird:

So I'll play you a little bit. I'm very fond of, how many of you love music?

Nearly all my family are in music. My daughter at the moment, I hope is about to sign a deal with... a million and a half in New York sometime in the next two or three weeks. But I'm very fond of opera. My second wife, she was trained by the same teacher as Kiri Te Kanawa. I'm very fond of opera.

Drayton Bird:

(singing)

Drayton Bird:

This is the opening for *Così fan tutte*, written by Mozart, and "Così fan tutte" means, "So do they all," and the aria is about, a faithful woman is like a phoenix.

It's a very sexist aria.

And so you've heard about them. People tell you about them, but I've never actually seen one.

Drayton Bird:

And I think a lot of the stuff that's going on in marketing at the moment is a bit like that.

In other words, people keep on telling about all these marvellous thing that are going to happen to you, how it's going to be wonderful, but it doesn't.

It really doesn't.

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And the reason it doesn't, is because there are too many lies flying around. There are too many people telling you,

"You don't have to think, it's all going to happen. It'll take you half a day and you're going to be fucking rich."

It's all bollocks. I'm still learning after 60-odd years.

Drayton Bird:

So it's too much of this stuff going on.

It's really, really a scandal. It's a scandal.

And it is actually made worse, the lies are made worse.

They're made worse because the other thing that's going on is, people are being trained to be morons. That's what's happening. Everyone's talking about the wonders of the Internet. People are being trained to be morons.

Drayton Bird:

How are they being trained to be morons?

Well let's have a look at something.

How many people belong to LinkedIn? And how many of you get fucking moronic messages from people saying,

"I'm somewhere in India and I'm an expert in so and so. Would you like to get on the phone and talk to me for 15 fucking minutes?"

Drayton Bird:

And you see, what happens when that conversation takes place?

Look at this. You don't have to think. I'm glad. Good for you.

Thanks, I'm not sure. In other words, you don't even have to answer. We'll give you a stupid reply that you can press a button and send off.

So it's pressed button stupidity. So people are being trained not to think. It's happening all the time.

Drayton Bird:

So that's me moaning about that. And there's such shit flying around.

I look at it in disbelief. I think, who is buying this crap?

One I saw two days ago had me in hysterics. Just in the past few weeks, I've seen so many miracles.

They've been so real and so tangible. God started helping me recognise the patterns of these miracles. Or more accurate, the math for producing miracles.

That's what I call the miracle factor! That's fucking bollocks, yeah?

Drayton Bird:

I can remember, one of the many people I learned from was a guy called Gene Griffin.

And he told me about the way religious people make money.

And he told me about one, they had a whole factory of people opening envelopes from idiots who'd sent in because God was

going to give them a miracle. So same thing's happening. You're getting all this rubbish pumping out, it's a bad thing.

Drayton Bird:

Okay. That's all I wish to complain about today. I think I'll leave if that's all right with you.

He's not paying me. I'd like to talk to you a little bit about what I believe, what I think I've discovered, apart from the fact that I've discovered it's bloody hard to make money in this game.

Do you know who it is?

"To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail."

Drayton Bird:

I believe that one of the great dangers if you wish to succeed, is just not knowing enough.

Just not knowing enough. At the moment, markets are a bit like guttering swine.

They hear the loudest thing.

Content marketing.

When the fuck could you do any marketing without any content, for fuck's sake?

What are you talking about? Silent commercials with no pictures. Blank pages in the newspapers. Of course you got to have fucking content.

Drayton Bird:

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And some guy starts a fucking institute. An institute to point out that you need content. And part of the institute's advice is, for fuck's sake, don't ask people to do anything after they've read whatever you've sent out.

So reverse marketing. It's unbelievable.

Drayton Bird:

Then we've got the great online thing.

Digital. Let's go digital. Let's all go digital.

Fuck off!

It's as though you've decided that the only way of getting to where you want to go is to walk. Or to catch the train. Nothing else.

I believe that if you wish to succeed and wish to be making money for a long time, making a living. I'm still making a living, I'm astonished.

And the reason I'm making a living is because I've done every bloody thing and fucked it up right, left, and center.

I think it's very, very important not to think that you just need a hammer in marketing.

Drayton Bird:

I made a list of the things I've worked in myself, and I think you have to understand, and if possible, practice all these things. Certainly follow them and pay attention.

Drayton Bird:

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First of all, research. If you don't understand enough about research, well you should.

I actually started a research business, one of the many, many enterprises I've been disastrous at.

I did the first research for British Royal. I called it Action Research.

I named the company Action Research, because I thought,

"What's the point in having research if you don't have any action?"

I think you have to understand research. You have to be interested in it.

Drayton Bird:

I think you have to understand public relations, which is very often the cheapest way of getting action. In my second job in advertising, I was called in by my boss, who said,

"We've decided to start a public relations division, Bird, and you seem to be a bright young lad. So would you like to do that?"

And I said,

"No thank you, sir."

And he says,

"Why's that?"

And I said,

"Well, public relations is to advertising as lying is to perjury."

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And he said,

"Well, it's either that or the sack."

So I said,

"I'm your man."

So I did PR for a bit, because it's so incredible effective.

Drayton Bird:

I think obviously you have to understand advertising.

I know most people don't. I think you have to understand point of sale.

About 70 percent of purchases are made as a result of people being in a place and seeing something.

Point of sale.

You really have to understand how point of sale works.

I think you have to understand sales promotion, because very often it's the stupidest way of building a database.

Drayton Bird:

I think you have to understand what we're talking about today, which is direct and interactive.

I assume you all understand that. I think you have to understand product placement.

A great many products have been built, big brands have been built without any advertising whatsoever.

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And if you are staying here and you go into your bedroom, you'll see there'll be bottles of something in the bathroom which has never been advertised, but is doing very well, thank you.

Lots and lots of products all built by product placement.

Drayton Bird:

I think you have to understand word of mouth, which now, a wonderful new, viral.

Viral.

What do people do now?

They take something that's been around forever, give it a fancy new name, and everyone's like, fuck me, viral.

Got to have some of that.

Bollocks.

You've got to understand personal selling.

There is nothing more effective in the world than somebody standing in front of you, who you can't bloody well ignore, selling you something.

Drayton Bird:

In the 1970s, I was so broke that I lived for seven years under a false name.

I was David for seven years because I owed the tax people so much fucking money.

And I went to work for a while, since we're in Poland. I'm glad to

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be here, by the way, because many, many years ago, I had an affair with a Polish girl who was born here, and she's one of the three women who's almost killed me.

I've still got a scar here where she hit me with a plate and hit an artery, and I would be dead if that happened today, because the hospital I walked to has been closed down and turned into a luxury hotel. Lovely girl.

Drayton Bird:

So I'll just tell you some stories actually.

She said to me,

"My friend has been making a lot of money as a stripper. Do you think I should do it?"

So I said,

"Darling,"

I said,

"You don't really want my opinion."

She said,

"What do you mean?"

I said,

"You want me to tell you whatever the fuck you want to do. So I'm just going to tell you that if you do it, you'll go right off sex."

I said,

"You'll be all bloody day watching people with macks over their knees, rustling about. It'll put you off sex,"

and it did.

And when I complained about the fact that it did push her off sex late one night, she hit me with a plate, and that's how I nearly died.

Drayton Bird:

I think you should understand, I love this, another wonderful word, experiential.

Nothing is more powerful again, than actually experiencing a product. And somebody thought, "We'll call it experiential." Because that sounds good.

Drayton Bird:

I think you got to understand pack design.

I had a client for awhile who took a product, and without any advertising, they just changed the design. The company I was working for, a pack design company.

And the product was called J20, and it's just watered down fruit juice. And it's been so successful that its own category is J20.

And all that was done just by good pack design and product placement. I think you got to understand pack design.

Drayton Bird:

I think you got to understand sponsorship.

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I once made a film for Malbroro on the effect of sponsorship.

It was only shown once to the board of directors of Philip Morris, and the chairman said,

"Lock that thing away. Nobody wants to ever see it again."

Understand sponsorship.

Drayton Bird:

I think you should understand workplace marketing, because the most important people in the world to you, if you've got a business, are the people who work for you.

David Ogilvy came into my agency one day and said,

"Drayton," he said,

"What exactly do you do? You're not the chairman, you're not the creative director, you're not the man. What do you do?" I said,

"David, I'm in charge of entertainment."

He said,

"What do you mean?"

I said,

"My job is to come in here and keep people entertained for so long that they never want to bloody leave. And then he looked around and there were people eating their lunch.

"By the way," he said.

"Do you pay for that or do they?"

I said,

"They do."

He said,

"Well done."

Drayton Bird:

I think you should understand cause-related marketing.

Charity.

At the moment, I'm doing some work for a charity.

Very difficult, writing about bees. Very difficult.

Understand charity. And you should understand what they call guerrilla marketing.

Guerrilla marketing.

My best example of that is my daughter, the one who's negotiating a deal at the moment, she hopes, with three different labels.

I used to go out and see her, and I'd go to New York regularly and she was with her mother. A madwoman.

And I used to catch the bus to Montclair. I always look at things. And I saw a post, and on the post was a little note that said,

"We give best prices for property, call such-and-such."

And above it, there was another little thing, almost identical, and

it said,

"We pay more than them. Ring so-and-so."

That's guerrilla marketing.

Catching people unawares.

Drayton Bird:

Okay. Let me try and talk to you a little bit about things that I think have helped me a lot.

This is the best book I've ever read on the subject of getting ideas.

It's James Webb Young, former creative director of J. Walter Thompson in Chicago, who wrote another book I read many years ago called

'How to Become an Advertising Man'.

Read

'A Technique for Getting Ideas'.

That's what I can say. The man was fucking brilliant. Ideas are hard to come by, aren't they?

Very, very interesting subject. I could bore the pants off you on that subject. But you'll be delighted to tell you I won't.

Drayton Bird:

So understanding how to get ideas, the process of starting by doing your research, obviously, and then writing down anything that comes into your head, and then leaving it alone.

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You know, every single person here, every single one of you, at some point, many, many times, you've said,

"I've just had an idea. I don't know where it came from."

And it comes from your subconscious. And you have to give your subconscious a chance to do some work.

So you read the brief, you do all your research, you write down anything that pops into your head, no matter how ludicrous, and then you forget it.

You leave it alone and do something else.

Drayton Bird:

And then, that's where your subconscious will do the work for you.

And then you come back and you start writing.

And you write like a maniac.

And then you edit, and edit, and edit, and edit.

I used to, I'm too lazy now, but I used to edit about seven times.

I think it's worth, this is just my point of view. You may think I'm talking shit, but this is what I think, the way things work and the way things should work, and the way things don't bloody well work very often.

Drayton Bird:

So I had a guy I hired many years ago, 1979, who was formerly of the Reader's Digest, who at that time, and for quite a long time, were the best marketing organisation in the world apart

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from the American Express, who were also clients of mine and nearly bloody drove me mad. And this guy, who ended up handling the marketing for IBM worldwide, a guy called Stuart Pearson.

We started talking about how it works, how everything works.

And based on what he'd learned at the Reader's Digest, we produced this. That's all you're trying to do.

Some masochist sitting down there has got a picture of that in my book. I don't have many ideas, they're all written down.

Drayton Bird:

That's how it works. You've got to understand the context of what you're doing. Am I all right for time, or am I...?

Speaker 1:

You're good.

Drayton Bird:

You poor buggers. You're here, where are you going to go?

Drayton Bird:

Here's the next thing I feel extraordinarily strongly about, that's Charlie Munger, and my whole life, I've known no wise people over a broad subject matter area who didn't read all the time. None, zero.

Warren Buffet's right hand man.

Most people don't bloody well read enough. When you read, you

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have to take it in. You have to make an effort. It's not going to happen if you just watch things on the bloody screen. Not going to work for you.

Read. I read every goddamn thing you can think of and quite a few things you couldn't.

Especially if it's something I don't understand. I'm always happy. I don't know.

I'm always happy if a client comes along to me who does something I know nothing about.

Drayton Bird:

Are you taking pictures? He's going to shoot you.

He is a violent motherfucker. All this talk about how he came along to Bristol and he bought me a few drinks, it's all fucking nonsense.

He came and said,

"I'll beat the living shit out of you, because of what you did to my people. Your people did to my people."

If you don't behave yourself.

Drayton Bird:

We're going to have a break now. I'd like to introduce you to somebody.

I'm trying to write my autobiography at the moment, which is a bit of a stretch.

And I'll tell you why it's a bit of a stretch. Because between 1967

and 2004, I was drunk. I was drunk.

The only reason I'm here is because of another Polish person.

In about 1972, when I was David, I met a guy, a crook called Val, a Polish guy, in the Hilton in London.

And I said, "Shit, I'm desperate."

He said, "I can probably fix you up with something."

Drayton Bird:

And he introduced me to Count Kapinsky, and Count Kapinsky was a Polish colonel, one of the people who charged the German tanks on horseback in 1939.

And I spent a very measurable two or three months trying to sell malt whiskey for investment on the telephone.

I hate the bloody telephone, I'm terrified of it. But I admired this man so much.

He was 62, I think, and he had a 19-year-old girlfriend. Fucking great man, give me something to aim for.

Drayton Bird:

And one day, I said to him,

"Kapinsky, how come you're not dead? You drink like a bloody fish."

And he said,

"Because one day a week, I don't drink. And that's what saved me."

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One day a week, between '67 and 2004, I didn't drink, and then I found a good woman who saved me. Who stopped me drinking.

No, she didn't. Who made me moderate my drinking.

Drayton Bird:

Okay, so writing the autobiography is hard if you can't remember anything, so it's always a good idea to get somebody who can help you.

How many people here would like to write a book? Be honest, how many of you? Let's have a look.

Well, you're in luck. Because I've got somebody here who will help you write a book. Would you like that?

She's really clever. I love her. I like eccentric people. I do not like normal people, I can't stand the buggers.

Normal people are boring. I like eccentric people. So this lady, she keeps sheep.

And one of my former proteges, who's now the vice chairman of Ogilvy & Mather, Rory Sutherland, very, very funny. If you ever want to laugh, go watch him on the box. Very, very funny guy.

And he saw this picture and he said,

"Is that a Welsh sheep?" Because he's Welsh. Patriotic. And she said,

"No, it's not a Welsh sheep."

Drayton Bird:

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But she doesn't just do that. She's only going to be here for today and tomorrow, because then she's fucking off to take part in a competition, because she does stuff on the trapeze. And she's over there.

Stand up, stand up. Look, isn't she great? Look at the bloody hair, man. Fuck me, I love girls with green hair. So if you're thinking of writing a book, she's the one to talk to. She's a very, very good... She can actually write almost as badly as me. I'll put something out and then she's revise it and it sounds like me. Bit of a worry. So you don't have to write the book at all. She'll do it for you. And she's cheap-ish.

Drayton Bird:

I thought we might do a little bit of interactive. Join in, a bit of a challenge. I apologise to my friends over there on the right, how have seen this 3,462 times before, because they've come to all my events when they've got fuck all else to do.

But nevertheless, I'm pleased to say that every time I show these, they get one or two wrong.

Drayton Bird:

Okay. A few years ago, a guy rang me up and he said, I'm working for this insurance company called Prudential.

And everybody here is about to get fired in this division, because we've got this thing that is not selling. Do you think you could help?

So I said,

"Buy me a drink."

And so, here are two ads, and all you have to do is tell me which

one of the two ads did better than the other one. There's one. There's another one.

Drayton Bird:

You don't have to look at them for very long, because remember, the average ad is only seen for about two seconds.

So who thinks that that one would have done better than the other one? Stand up, all the people who think that one would have done better than the other one.

Okay. Now, who thinks that one would have done better? Stand up. They've got it right, for a fucking change.

Drayton Bird:

Yeah. I can seriously tell you, that one ad, which saved all these people's jobs. Now I'll try and tell you why.

What do you mean I should pay less for my health insurance? Is there any reason to fucking read on? That's like saying I shouldn't run around kicking people in the balls that I don't know.

There is no benefit, there is no curiosity, and there's not enough copy. All I did was I said,

"So tell me about it."

And they said,

"Well, you know, if you don't make a claim, they don't charge you."

"Explain it to me."

Drayton Bird:

And then they'll say exactly what you get. Instantly up to 30 percent off, guaranteed 25 percent no claims bonus. What people don't realise sufficiently is that people will read a bloody book if they're interested.

Years ago I was in the Philippines, in Manila, where actually, this ring.

My partner bought me this ring there. Well, why would you buy a Cartier ring in Manila? I don't know, it's cheap.

Drayton Bird:

And somebody showed me these two ads.

"Ever been on a diet? There's good news, bad news, and real news."

Which was tested.

"Do you turn your head when someone shouts, 'Hey, fatso?'"

Okay. Who thinks that one would have done better of the two?

Anyone think that would have done better?

Stand up, the people who think this one would have done better.

Stand up the people who think this one would have done better.

You're a bunch of fucking idiots. You should have watched, John Carlton had it right immediately.

Drayton Bird:

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Do you think people like it? Let's say you're fat and you're waddling down the bloody street, and somebody says,

"Hey, fatso."

Are you pleased?

You say,

"thank you"?

Fuck off. Crazy. Don't insult people. Always imagine that it's real.

Seriously. When you're writing something or reviewing something, imagine that it's real. Because if it's any good, it will be real to the people who are experiencing it, yeah.

They will put themselves in that position.

Drayton Bird:

Okay, here are three emails. A, the copy is identical. The only difference is the layout. Appealing to idiots.

You don't have to read the copy because it's the same. Get 10 bingo cards absolutely free.

Who thinks this one would have done better than the other two?
Okay.

Who thinks this one would have done better than the other two?

Who thinks this one would have done better than the other two?

Thank God we have an educated audience. Don't make your emails look slick.

Don't make anything look slick.

Nothing beats sincerity.

Nothing beats sincerity.

Drayton Bird:

It's something from me to you.

The way I write stuff, is I dictate everything.

Every bloody thing.

I dictate it, I send it to my PA, she transcribes it, and then I fuck about with it, and then it goes out.

And I usually have an idea in the morning, and it goes out at one o'clock.

And probably if I knew more about this business stuff, I'd know that I was sending it out at the wrong time, but that's another subject.

Drayton Bird:

Years ago, I was speaking at the Institute of Marketing, and a young man came up to me and said,

"I want to work for you."

And I said,

"Sorry. Can't stand the ones I've got. Don't need any more."

So then he came back to me a few months later. He said,

"If I start an agency, will you be my chairman?"

So I said,

"All right, then."

Drayton Bird:

And he started an agency. Very interesting man. Very, very interesting man. He started an agency and I was his chairman for a bit, and then he decided he didn't want to have an agency anymore.

And he became a doctor. So now he's a doctor.

But I have lunch with him every now and then and talk to him about his sex life. It's great to be a doctor, you know? If only I could look the part.

Drayton Bird:

Anyhow, he had a product. Which I actually bought. So here are two ads. This ad, it's a good product, it does work. I've tried it. And that was tested against this ad. This is real. I've got good news for you, by the way. Has anybody ever been to a presentation where they said, "If only it were longer." With any luck, this'll be shorter. I have to make it shorter before I fall over.

Drayton Bird:

Okay. Who thinks that one would have beaten the other one?

Don't be shy. Act on your beliefs.

Who thinks this one would have done better?

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Of course it did better. The other one, never run an ad that just says,

"This is what it is."

Run an ad that says,

"This is what it does."

So I won't bore you. There's something you should look for when you're running an ad. Notice the [inaudible 00:39:51] at the top there, the H.

That will increase readership. These are the kind of little things that you should know.

Little things that make big differences.

Drayton Bird:

So then that was tested against this one. My guy, me being the chairman, he said,

"Do you think you could improve on this, Dray?"

And I said,

"Probably. Give me a couple of drinks and I'll be back to you."

You see the difference? The difference is very simple.

Blissful relief, yeah?

Emotion will always beat logic. Then he said,

"The client's very pleased. Do you think you could do any better?"

I said,

"Fuck off."

I said,

"Give me a few minutes and I'll come back to you."

Special offer for Daily Express readers.

Drayton Bird:

One of the great American copywriters said,

"Your message should single out,"

I think it was Claude Hopkins.

How many people here have read Claude Hopkins?

How many people have not read Claude Hopkins? You fucking disgrace.

That's rather like saying,

"I'm a Christian but I've never read the Bible."

I did a talk once to some people, I've done lots of talks. There were loads of people from Ogilvy & Mather, I couldn't fucking believe it. These idiots hadn't read Ogilvy on advertising. Okay.

Drayton Bird:

So your offer should single out your prospect like a man-something, I can't remember.

It should single out, like a man shouting... I can't remember. I

can't remember the line. My brain's going, by the way. It's about 70 percent fucked off already.

Drayton Bird:

Okay, this is a client of mine. Actually, my ex-partner who I trained as a copywriter went and got a job here because they paid twice as much as I did. And then she left this business and now she's made somewhere between two and two and a half million quid in three years out of insurance.

So Hargreaves Lansdown are a very, very large insurance company, and I've got a hilarious interview I did with their chairman, who's a hoot, somewhere.

So this was tested against that. Same copy, different typeface. Who thinks that one would have beaten the other one? It's just the typeface.

Who thinks this one would have done better than the other one?

No one?

Don't care?

I'm in wrong room?

Who is this man?

So who thinks this one would have done better than the other one?

Drayton Bird:

Yeah. So this day, there are lots of undecideds out there.

This will usually win, even though it's a typewriter face, really.

It's because it's got a broader shape. It's easier to take in.

The chairman, who actually I became quite a friend of, who is I think worth 45 billion pounds, maybe more.

He said,

"I don't care."

He said,

"I don't like that typeface."

It's his business.

Drayton Bird:

Here's an interesting one.

This is one of the first ads that we ran when we started our agency in 1977 for the Reader's Digest, which was our first big client, and I learned a hell of a lot from them.

And this is an ad, and here's another ad for the same thing.

Now, one of the most important things you must do is, if you've got a winner, see if you can get another winner. And I wrote this one, which was doing very well, and I was walking past a girl.

I've always been very keen on finding people. And I'd find some, I'm training a girl at the moment because I said,

"You could do well at this."

I like it. I like to see people succeed.

Drayton Bird:

I was walking past this girl's desk, and she was the girl that had been fired.

She came to me in tears, she's like,

"I've been fired. What shall I do?"

I said,

"Didn't you used to work in publishing in Canada?"

And she said,

"Yeah."

I said,

"Well, you should become a copywriter."

And she was a creative director within about three years.

I was walking past her desk and I saw she'd written, she'd got that there. She'd just written the line.

I said,

"We should test that."

Both ads did very well.

Always remember that one ad, it's not just a matter of an ad beating another ad.

One ad will do better to a different segment of people. Never assume that your people are homogeneous.

Or is it homogeneous?

Whatever it is, there are different people who are appealed to by different things.

Drayton Bird:

Here's another one. Same copy. Hargreaves Lansdown.

But that's got a swoosh down the side, that one doesn't.

Who thinks that one would have beaten the other one? Anyone?

Who thinks that one would have done better?

How long have we been together? 20 minutes? 25 minutes? 30 minutes?

Does it seem a long time to you? I understand.

You're getting better. Yeah, the swoosh wouldn't work, and I said it wouldn't work, because it gives the story away to start with, you know? I think it was a 20 percent difference.

Drayton Bird:

This was a client of mine called Nielsen. What a bunch of cunts.

So they came to me and they said,

"We've got this ad. Do you think you could do anything? We've got this product. What do you think?"

So this one, and the idea is,

"Earn while you surf," so have a camera on your back or whatever, and we see what you're looking at.

Drayton Bird 83rd Event: ToeCracker's Surprise

That was tested against that one.

30,000 pounds, because they would pay people. Giving them a chance to enter.

Which one do you think did better for the great Nielsen organisation?

Who thinks this one would have done better? Nobody. And who thinks that one would have done better?

Drayton Bird:

You know what? I said to them, I said,

"Do you really think that a fucking housewife in Birmingham gives a monkey's fuck about the future of the Internet? What the fuck is going through your heads?"

And they said,

"We've tested yours, and it's pissing all over everything in [inaudible 00:47:22]."

But they don't run it because some idiot in New York said,

"It doesn't fit in with our corporate brand."

Pff. Now all these housewives are thinking,

"I don't think that fits in with Nielsen's corporate brand image, do you?"

Maybe. The more time I spend in this business, the more astonished I am at the nonsense that goes on.

Drayton Bird:

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This was done by, there's a guy that I've worked with. What happens with me is that people approach me and say,

"Can I work for you?"

And this guy approached me 12 years ago. I was doing a speech actually at a golf club.

Complicated way of taking a walk with boring people. And I finished my talk because I'd managed to get a lot of money out of him because I knew that I always got top marks, so I was like, well they put my prizes up.

Drayton Bird:

And I said,

"You know the sad thing about what's happening now? What I'm saying? Do you want to know what the sad thing is?"

I said,

"You're all looking at me and you're thinking, oh yeah. But you won't fucking do anything, will you?"

And one guy sat there, he said,

"I'm going to do something."

And he said,

"I'd like to come and work for you."

And he's been working for me ever since. And he wrote most of that. Because he really understands what people are about. He's from Birmingham.

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If you're from Birmingham, you've got to understand what people are like.

Drayton Bird:

One of the great, great, great men of advertising. My advice to you is to study the greats. Anything I see about somebody really good, I want to know.

And this is what he used to say when somebody brought a copy that he didn't like. He would look at them, and he would go,

"Would you say that to someone you know?"

When you write copy, read it out. Does it sound like someone talking?

If it doesn't, rewrite it until it does. Because people, they say it to themselves as they read it. Some of them, as you know, move their lips. I used to do that, but I'm too old now.

Drayton Bird:

There was a great advertising man in England in the 1920s, and I spent a day with someone who worked for him. Completely wasted day in terms of business, but immensely valuable to me, because he talked to me about this great advertising man in the 1920s about what he was like.

Really interesting people. One of my favourite quotes, almost my favourite,

"The proper study of mankind is man."

The proper study of mankind is man. Because that's where the money is. So that was actually written in the 18th century.

I'm fascinated by people.

Drayton Bird:

Right, I'll go quickly through my list of things that you ought to do when you're reviewing your copy. I like that picture.

Any time I see a picture, I'm thinking,

"I wonder if I could use that. Can I shoehorn that into, something about marketing."

Number one, read the brief.

Have you met it? Sounds obvious, often neglected.

Client says,

"That wasn't what I asked for. Did you read the brief?"

Review quickly, ignore the details. Does the approach make sense and is it emotional?

Does it demonstrate the problem and the solution? Is it appropriate?

Don't be funny about serious things and vice versa.

Drayton Bird:

The next bit, how do you gain and keep attention?

Is your promise precise, not vague?

Does the opening headline, subject line, give a reason to carry

on?

Do you say why you were writing?

That will increase response.

Just say,

"I'm writing to you because."

Because the natural thing is,

"Why are you talking to me?"

Does it flow logically step by step? Often I find I've got things in the wrong order.

Have you used any knowledge? That's a bit strange, isn't it?

Hang on. Have you used any knowledge that may matter to your prospects?

Now think about what they're interested in.

Drayton Bird:

Do you give every reason to reply?

Any reason that you miss out is a sale lost.

That's why long copy almost invariably does better than short. Is every sense of objection dealt with?

It's not so much why they should do something, it's what are they thinking why they shouldn't do something?

Any testimonials or independent proof?

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Does it read like someone talking?

That's why I dictate practically everything. Any relevant fact left out?

Have you repeated the chief arguments at least three times?

Research shows that if you don't do it three times, you're losing sales. How do you get action?

Have you reminded them what they gain and what they may lose? Have you asked repeatedly for a reply?

Have you reminded them of the incentive?

Drayton Bird:

I go back to ads that were written in the 1920s and '30s when people had no money, and I look to see how they closed.

And they're really, really powerful, because it was hard to take money off people. Now when people have got a lot of money, you should go back to when they didn't have a lot of money. You'll do better.

Drayton Bird:

Would an idiot understand it?

Very, very important.

Would an idiot understand it? People may not be idiots, but they are idiots when they're reading your stuff or listening to your stuff or watching your stuff, because they don't sit there and say,

"I really got to concentrate on this."

Drayton Bird:

I would like to talk to you. I think I've got about five minutes left, have I?

Drayton Bird:

I'm pleased to tell you that we are reaching the climactic moment that you've been waiting for when I'm going to shut the fuck up.

I believe, and have always believed with fury that you only come into this world with one thing, and that is you. And you only leave this world with one thing, and that is you. I advise you, in all seriousness, try to concentrate on being you, not somebody else.

You see all these people, all of them are the fucking same.

They've all got their little beards, all fucking idiots. Wearing T-shirts to advertise somebody else.

Drayton Bird:

Judy Garland. I found this three days ago. I thought it was good.

Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.

Most people are second-rate versions of somebody else.

Don't do it. It's a waste of fucking time.

You might just as well never have lived. I like outrageous, different, unusual, crazy people who keep sheep and enter trapeze competition.

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And I'm sure you're all heaving a sigh of relief at the thought.

Thank God the old cunt is finished. Thank you.