
mobile CB units, but we had the first Pocket CB. And it was the name itself that expressed the concept.

Or take the example of the Pocket Yellow Pages I referred to in the previous chapter. Doesn't that name express everything you really need to know about the product in a simple concept? In that ad I didn't sell the product, but rather the concept of standing in a phone booth and pulling out an electronic directory to the surprise and delight of those around you.

Another example was a smoke detector I was selling. Instead of selling it as a smoke detector, the headline screamed, "Nose"—a product that just sat on your ceiling and sniffed the air. It sold quite well.

Combining Products into Concepts

Sometimes the concept naturally comes from the product and other times the concept can be created. I remember once running several products in my catalog without much copy and discovering two that sold quite well. Rather than run them as separate products in full-page ads, I decided to run them together in one full-page ad as a concept.

The two products were a miniature travel alarm and a chess computer. But rather than develop a concept for each, I wrote the headline "Winners" and told how both products were the top-selling products in our recent catalog. The headline put both products under a single concept and made them both winners while drawing attention to our catalog.

Sales continued briskly with the chess computer in 1978 when I received a call from the company in Hong Kong from whom we were importing the product. "Joe," said my friend Peter Auge, the man in Hong Kong supplying me with the computer, "I think I can get Anatoli Karpov, the Soviet chess champion, to endorse our chess computer. I'm friends with him through a contact in Russia and it might make the chess computer sell better."

Indeed it would, I thought, but let's come up with a concept using Karpov—not as a person who will endorse the product but as somebody whom we can challenge to play our unit. And in-

deed, that's what we did. Our first major ad with Karpov's name appeared with the headline "Soviet Challenge."

Subheadline: Can an American chess computer beat the Soviet chess champion? A confrontation between American space-age technology and a Soviet psychological weapon.

Copy: The Soviet Union regards chess as a psychological weapon, not just a game. It is a symbol of Communism's cultural struggle with the West.

So when Russian Anatoli Karpov competed against the Russian defector Victor Korchnoi, he had the entire Soviet Union's resources at his disposal, including a hypnotist and neuropsychologist.

Karpov won. And with it the world's undisputed chess championship. Karpov, however, has never confronted American space-age technology and in particular JS&A's new chess computer.

Of course the copy continued to talk about the challenge we were making against Karpov. That was the concept. We weren't selling chess computers. We were selling the challenge against the Russian champion and as a consequence selling chess computers. It was taking a very staid product and giving the entire promotion a more emotional appeal.

Soviet Intrigue

I was sitting in my office as the ad was breaking throughout the United States when I received an urgent telegram from overseas. Opening it up, I saw right away it was from Karpov. "I am going to sue you for using me in your advertising without permission." Signed: Anatoli Karpov.

I was told that I had permission to use his name by my friend Peter, who said, in fact, that he would be sending me the endorsement contract and that I should go ahead and run the ad. So I did, thinking all was okay.

What to do? Simple. I could just see my next headline: "Soviet Union Sues JS&A" or maybe "Little JS&A Attacked by Soviets." What a great concept. But before I could sit down and write it, my friend Peter called and advised me that he had gotten a copy of the telegram, too, and that everything had been worked out with Karpov's agent and there was nothing to worry about.

Karpov would endorse the chess computer and I could continue my ad campaign.

I then sat down and wrote the third ad in the series, entitled "Karpov Accepts," which talked about the challenge made to Karpov and how he then decided that for whatever reason, he didn't want to play the chess computer as part of the challenge. Instead he could just endorse it and hope that many Americans would learn to improve their chess game on it.

Concept Selling Does Well

All three ads did very well and more than 20,000 chess computers were sold. And all three had different concepts associated with them. Meanwhile, my competition was out there in force trying to sell their chess computers but not succeeding because they were selling chess computers and not Soviet Challenges and Karpov Accepts—concept advertising.

If your advertising just sells the product, be careful. You need a concept. If you've come up with a unique concept, fantastic. You'll do much better.

Price Can Also Affect Concept

Sometimes simply changing the price of a product can dramatically alter its concept. For example, when we were offering our Pocket CB at \$39.95 it came across as a serious electronic product similar to a full-sized CB radio. When we dropped the price to \$29.95 it became more of a sophisticated walkie-talkie. And finally when we dropped the price to \$19.95, the product was perceived as a toy—all this despite the fact that the copy in the ad was pretty much the same.

Finding the concept is often not easy. It takes all the skills of a conceptual thinker to come up with the right idea and the right position. One of my favorite advertisements that really captured the essence of this chapter was an ad I once read from the Leo Burnett ad agency. It was a full-page ad that appeared in *Advertising Age* magazine and is reproduced on the next page.

It's so true. Every product has that unique selling proposition that makes it stand out from the rest. And it is indeed up to