

DIRECTORY AND REFERENCE

MEDIA

The reference medium or directory, whether it is a city directory, state gazetteer or a business directory, ties up closely with other forms of advertising. It is distinguished from the creative style of advertising in that it is passive while the buyer is active. On the other hand, the creative advertising in newspapers, magazines, trade papers, etc., is active while the buyer is passive.

Both are necessary in a well-rounded campaign. The function of creative advertising is to make people want what they did not want before, and to educate them to the point where they are conscious of that want. Reference advertising is an aid at the critical time when the initiative has passed from the seller to the buyer; when the desire to buy is strong, and the question is whether the prospect will buy the advertised article, another brand, or cool off altogether while waiting for the "catalog and name of nearest dealer." If the advertisement which suggested the want can be supplemented by another directing the prospect to the place where he can see the goods, the efficiency of the entire advertising expenditure will be greatly increased.

The directory has a 100 per cent prospect circulation inasmuch as its very nature makes it sell only where it will be used. Its circulation is not so much gauged by the number of copies sold as by the number of people who consult it. There are directory libraries maintained throughout the country for reference purposes, and in them may be found all the most important directories published. Surprise is often expressed by librarians at the number of people who are constantly consulting these sources of information.

There are many kinds of directories and "catalogs," each covering some trade, or locality, or group interest, in which organized information may be found that is useful to the buyer. In every buying center the local directory presents a medium of universal accessibility. For over a hundred years people have been accustomed to refer to it as a logical place to find certain kinds of information. A system of exchange enables each publisher to offer free access to a file of the latest issues of directories from all over the country. This gives every local advertisement a nation-wide accessibility.

The long life of a directory advertisement is a strong point in its favor. It has an existence of 365 days and sometimes twice that, depending on the frequency of issue. It is always kept where it can be found by the buyer when he wants it.

It has a strong appeal for institutional advertising, as reputable publications give prestige to the advertisers who patronize them. It is a significant fact that from 80 to 90 per cent of the advertising in these publications is renewed year after year.